Scoping Review of Regulation of Pre-licensure Education of Registered Nurses
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Introduction & Background
• Regulation of pre-licensure registered nurse (RN) education aims to protect the public and assure quality education
• Globally, such regulation varies considerably
• Negative consequences of professional licensure and regulation have been reported, generally using non-nursing examples; therefore, leaders in nursing regulation have indicated these negative assumptions may not apply to nursing, and expressed the need to adapt to regulatory trends
• Benton (2017) stated nurse regulators and leaders need published evidence with summarized outcomes to
  o Support or refute the value of regulation
  o Inform policy decisions
  o Counter potential threats of deregulation
• A scoping review exploring this topic is the most appropriate methodology to
  o Unearth existing evidence
  o Generate a broad overview of what is known and not known

Methods
• Joanna Briggs Institute methodology for scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2017)
• Protocol developed a priori
• Three-step search strategy
  o Keywords: nurse, education, licensure, accreditation, regulation
  o Paper selection (Figure 1)
    • Initial review by first author
    • Independent review by both authors
• Detailed data extracted, mapped, and synthesized in tabular format (Figure 2)

Review Objective
• Examine and map existing information regarding outcomes of regulation of pre-licensure RN education, identify gaps, and inform opportunities for future research

Review Question
• What outcomes have been reported about the regulation of pre-licensure RN education?

Inclusion Criteria
• Concepts of focus
  o Pre-licensure education programs that prepare students to become RNs
  o Pre-licensure RN students
  o Pre-licensure graduates of RN programs
• Reported outcome(s) of
  o Government regulation
  o Accreditation
  o Regulatory requirements for initial RN licensure related to nursing education
• Types of studies or papers
  o Quantitative or qualitative designs
  o Economic evaluations
  o Textual evidence
  o Available in English
• Discuss any country or countries

Exclusion Criteria
• Only focus = nurse midwife education
• Unsubstantiated opinion literature
• Contemporarily irrelevant historical papers
• Technical reports, bulletins, news articles, newsletters

Results
• Included papers (n = 20)
  o 19 published in professional journals
  o 1 unpublished doctoral dissertation
  o Range of publication year: 2003 - 2018
• Concepts
  o Regulation and/or accreditation of RN education programs or pre-licensure graduate nurses
  o Impact of regulation on pre-licensure graduates of RN education programs
• Geographical contexts
  o International, Africa, Western Europe, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Canada, People's Republic of China, United States, Sri Lanka
• Methodological approaches
  o Case studies, descriptive methods, discourse analysis, literature reviews, opinions, policy analysis
• Five categories of outcomes
  o Protection of public, individuals, profession
  o Professional status of nursing
  o Meeting health needs
  o Nurse mobility
  o Standardized testing

Discussion
• Global variation in nursing education regulation and geographical differences made synthesis challenging
• Most reported outcomes were positive (Figure 3)
• Positive outcomes reported
  o Protecting the public
  o Protecting individuals (students)
  o Empirical evidence lacking
• Variable outcomes reported
  o Protection of nursing profession (mixed)
  o Advancing nursing's professional status (mixed)
  o Nurse mobility (neutral or positive)
  o Meeting population health needs (mixed)
  o Standardized testing (neutral or negative)
• Identified discord between nurses in education, practice, and regulatory roles

Conclusions
• Public protection is most reported outcome of regulation of pre-licensure RN education
• Significant gaps in empirical evidence
  o Research and publication are advised to determine appropriate outcomes to measure the impact of regulation on pre-licensure RN education, define those outcomes, and identify sound measurement strategies
• Suggested approaches
  o Economic evaluation (Gao, Chan, & Cheng, 2012)
  o Comparative research (Xu, 2010)
• Strong nursing leaders with political savvy and partnerships with leaders in higher education and policy-makers are advised to globally advance nursing education and regulation

Selected References