# Preliminary Findings: An Exploration of the Effects of Media's Negative Stereotypes on Nursing Image

## Marielle Garcia, SN
## Mount Saint Mary's University - Los Angeles, CA

## Introduction

According to *Gallup Poll: Nursing Most Trusted Profession* (2016), nursing has been voted as the most trusted profession for the last 15 years. Yet in many instances, negative portrayals of nurses from stereotypes of doctor's "handmaidens," "sex objects," "romance darlings," or "self-sacrificial angels" persists and have ultimately skewed the image of nursing (Graveto, Cardoso & Silva, 2015). The role of the media is central to the dissemination of negative portrayals of nurses. Media operates to inform, explain, and most often translate into public perception and decision making (Graveto, Cardoso & Silva, 2015). In relation to nursing image, media not only constructs the public's reality, it also serves as an instrument to form social representations about the profession (Graveto, Cardoso & Silva, 2015).

Therefore, if negative stereotypes about nursing are predominantly reported, consciously the public will only perceive inaccurate portrayal of nurses, and if accurate representations are not affirmed or are invisible, the public will only gain an incomplete and one-sided image (Graveto, Cardoso & Silva, 2015). In that regard, exploring the function of mass media and its mechanism of control on nursing image can provide greater insight into public perception. Additionally, identification of nursing stereotypes aid in repairing negatively held beliefs. Ultimately, the result will better the nursing self-concept and restore the nursing image. The significance of discussing nursing image provides the public with a greater knowledge of nurses' professionalism and leads to better healthcare outcomes (Hoeve, Hansen & Roodbal, 2013).
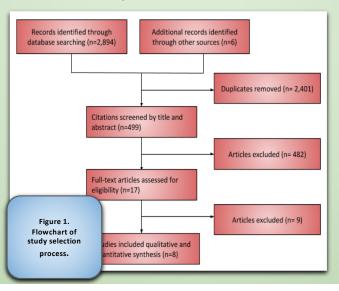
## Objectives

The researcher intended to explore the role of the media, currently held stereotypes, and media's influence on the nursing image.

- **The researcher's goal was to answer the question:** *"How do negative stereotypes from the media affect the image of nurses?"*
- The aim of this review was to determine the effect media has on the nursing profession and the relationship between the press and the nursing image as currently represented in the literature.

## Methodology

The researcher utilized an integrative review (IR) design which is a distinctive form of research that investigates a topic through review of literature (Tarraco, 2016).

- **Search Methodology:** The researcher identified media and stereotypes as the study's independent variable (IV) that may affect the study's dependent variable (DV), nursing image. The ancestry or footnote chasing and descendancy approaches were used to refine the search.
- **Databases & Data Management:** Bibliographic databases used included ProQuest: Nursing and Allied Health, Google Scholar, Wiley Online Library, SAGE Journals, CINAHL, Science Direct, and EBSCOHost.
- **Inclusion Criteria:** Peer-reviewed scholarly journals, media related literature during the timeframe of 2000 through 2020, subjects examining media, stereotypes, and nursing image.
- **Exclusion Criteria:** Trade journals, commentaries, editorials, and publication dates exceeding the last ten years.
- **Materials:** Yale New Haven Health Research Appraisal Tool, Search Documentation Form, and Table of Evidence



**Figure 1. Flowchart of study selection process.**

(Records identified through database searching (n=2,894); Additional records identified through other sources (n=6); Duplicates removed (n= 2,401); Citations screened by title and abstract (n=499); Articles excluded (n= 482); Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n=17); Articles excluded (n= 9); Studies included qualitative and quantitative synthesis (n=8))

## Analysis & Results

**Analysis**
Each article was appraised to determine the level of evidence, quality of information, and reliability of the source using the Yale New Haven Health Research Literature Appraisal Tool with categories and themes developed.

**Results**
- Six articles reviewed; publication date range 2002 to 2018.
- **Quantitative articles reviewed** = 4 articles
  - Specific Designs = 3 Correlational (articles #1, 4, &2); 1 Quasi-experimental (article #5)
- **Qualitative articles reviewed** = 2 articles
  - Specific Designs = 1 Descriptive (article #3); 1 Interpretive historical (article #6)
- **Level of evidence** = 1 level II (article #5); 3 level III (article # 1, 2, & 4); 2 level IV (articles 3 & 6)
- **Quality of evidence** = Low quality=1 (article #3); Good quality=3 (articles # 2, 4, & 5); High quality=2 (artitles #1 & 6)
- **Categories/Codes** = Job satisfaction, Performance, Work Behavior, Turnover, Men vs. Women Nurses, Historical Bias, Reporting in Media, Theories (Adaptive Theory, Person/Environment, Social Role)
- **Themes** = Shaping Public Understanding of the Profession/Media's Representation of Nurses, Gender Bias/Stereotypes of Nurses, and The Effects of Stereotyping on Nursing Image, Theories Used to Study Nursing Image

## Conclusion

There is limited literature related to nursing image and how stereotypes or current media affect nurse's image. Therefore, the formation of categories and themes was difficult. Even so, the gathered studies helped to answer the research question and as a result, it appears that nursing image within the media has improved although not markedly. Stereotyping of nursing remains. It is noted that analysis of all articles is not complete, however preliminary results indicate that more extensive research, to include all research methods, is needed to determine the present state of nursing's image and gain a better understanding of how media could help improve negative nursing stereotypes that affect the public's perception of nurses.

## References

- Graveto, J. M. G. N., Cardoso, R. J. M., & Silva, F. A. D. Z. (2015). Construction and validation of the escala de comportamentos de abordagem aos média por enfermeiros (scale of media use behaviours by nurses)/Construção e validação e da escala de comportamentos de abordagem aos média por Enfermeiros/Construcción y validación de la escala de comportamientos de interacción con los medios de comunicación por enfermeros. *Revista De Enfermagem Referência, 4*(7), 61-70. doi:http://dx.doi.org.msmc.idm.oclc.org/10.12707/RIV15014
- Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library. (n.d.). Retrieved January 6, 2021, from https://library.medicine.yale.edu/sites/default/files/research_appraisal_tool_1-11-17.docx
- Hoeve, Y., Jansen, G., & Roodbol, P. (2013, May 26). The nursing profession: Public image, self-concept and professional identity. A discussion paper. Retrieved October 16, 2020, from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jan.12177
- James M Anderson Center for Health Systems Excellence. (n.d.). Retrieved October 16, 2020, from https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/research/divisions/j/anderson-center/evidence-based-care/legend
- Polit, D., & Beck, C. (2018). Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice. Retrieved September 21, 2020, from https://www.amazon.com/Essentials-Nursing-Research-Appraising-Evidence/dp/1496351290