



Review Article

Global health diplomacy in nursing, reinforcing challenges and benefits: A scoping review

Arthur Luís Barbosa Martins¹, Patrícia de Paula Queiroz Bonato², Bruna Sordi Carrara²,
Emerson Lucas Silva Camargo¹, Carla Aparecida Arena Ventura^{2*}

¹Department of Fundamental Nursing, Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing, University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, Brazil

²Department of Psychiatric Nursing and Human Sciences, Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing, University of São Paulo, Ribeirão Preto, Brazil

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Corresponding Author:

Carla Aparecida Arena Ventura,
Department of Psychiatric Nursing and
Human Sciences, Ribeirão Preto College of
Nursing, University of São Paulo, Ribeirão
Preto, Brazil, Avenida dos Bandeirantes,
3900, Ribeirão Preto, 14040-902, Brazil.
E-mail: caaventu@ceerp.usp.br

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ABSTRACT

Background & Aim: Global health diplomacy has become increasingly relevant in nursing, enabling nurses to address complex international health challenges. This literature review examines the challenges and benefits of nurses' involvement in global health diplomacy, focusing on their unique contributions to international healthcare.

Methods & Materials: A scoping review was conducted in November 2024 using databases including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL, and LILACS. Two independent researchers selected and analyzed studies, consolidating existing literature on nursing and global health diplomacy. The review highlights the field's complexities, opportunities, and nurses' roles in advancing global health.

Results: From 9 selected articles, findings were categorized into three themes: 1) integrating nursing education with global health, 2) professional skill enhancement and engagement in diplomacy, and 3) ethical practices and cultural sensitivity. Nurses face challenges such as navigating complex healthcare systems, cultural differences, and language barriers. However, their contributions significantly influence global health policies, improve healthcare access in underserved regions, and advocate for vulnerable populations. Engaging in global health diplomacy expands nurses' professional scope, enriches cultural understanding, and fosters leadership development. Limitations include the qualitative nature of available data and the evolving dynamics of global health diplomacy.

Conclusion: Nurses involved in global health diplomacy play a pivotal role in strengthening healthcare systems and advancing health equity. Despite existing challenges, their contributions yield substantial benefits. Future research should explore the impact of global health diplomacy on nursing practices, considering healthcare systems' contextual and local nuances.

Introduction

In recent decades, health has gained prominence as a crucial element for economic growth, and social development, and has consequently become a central component of foreign policies, national sovereignty, trade, security, tourism, human rights, and environmental agendas. In this scenario, opportunities arise to discuss health as a fundamental right, promoting strategies that aim for global well-being (1, 2).

Global Health comprises research focused on improving health and access to healthcare worldwide, promoting an interdisciplinary approach (3). Global Health also considers the transnational effects of globalization on social determinants and health

problems that extend beyond individual state control and affect various dimensions of human life (4-6). Finding solutions requires the collaboration of multiple social actors, including governments, and public and private international organizations (4).

Global Health Diplomacy, in turn, seeks to address both global health improvement and international relations that can facilitate this process, especially in conflict areas and resource-constrained contexts (3). The use of global health diplomacy strengthens nations' foreign policies, recognizing that health plays a crucial role in the economy and development, as well as contributing to the international leadership of countries (7).

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Global Health Diplomacy is a set of negotiations aimed at managing the global health policy environment and promoting better outcomes in ensuring health as a human right and a public good. This emerging field involves collaboration between diplomats and healthcare professionals, resulting in improved global health, promoting equity, and strengthening trust relationships between nations. Elements such as trade agreements and pandemics require international negotiations and cooperation (7).

Nursing plays a vital role in promoting universal health, encompassing areas such as health system policy, social determinants of health and illness, global culture, epidemics, communicable and non-communicable diseases, epidemiology, humanitarian actions, and emergency situations (8). This broad and multifaceted approach allows nurses to significantly contribute to global health by promoting equity, prevention, and care on an international scale (9). In this global scenario that values health as a critical factor for economic, social, and human development, the role of nurses gains prominence, as they constitute the largest contingent of human resources in health and operate at all levels of healthcare worldwide (8).

However, despite their significant presence, nurses' involvement in high-level decisions and the development of health policies has been limited, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2009 and reinforced in the State of the World's Nursing Report, released in 2020 (9,10). Acquiring roles in global health requires nurses to have a good understanding of the globalization process, the political economy of health, and a solid knowledge of human rights and global health diplomacy (8).

Therefore, health is considered a global public good, in which the improvement of one person's health cannot be achieved at the expense of excluding others (11). In post-war periods, health became a shared goal among nations, influencing diplomatic discussions and actions. Furthermore, humanitarian diplomacy in the health sector has also grown,

integrating this tool into countries' foreign policies (7).

The increasing interconnectedness resulting from globalization has profound implications for nursing and healthcare delivery. Health challenges transcend national borders, requiring nurses to be prepared to address these new challenges (12). In this context, this study aims to map the available scientific evidence on nursing's potential role in global health diplomacy, recognizing the fundamental role of nurses in promoting health in an increasingly interconnected world.

Methods

Study type

This work adopts a scoping review, conducted in November 2024, following the guidelines of the international PRISMA guide and the method proposed by JBI.

Identification of the guiding question

To guide this study, we formulated the following guiding question based on the PCC mnemonic combination:

- P (Population): nursing professionals
- C (Concept): health diplomacy
- C (Context): global health

The question guiding this study is: "What is the potential for nursing to engage in health diplomacy?" This question guided all stages of the review and analysis of the studies.

Database search

A comprehensive search was conducted covering various databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL, and LILACS. Including these diverse data sources ensured a broad search for articles related to the topic. Different combinations were performed with the keywords "global health", "health diplomacy, and "nurses". The complete strategies can be seen in Table 1.

Keywords were applied to the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the articles. The Rayyan software was used to manage and select the articles, a tool commonly used in systematic reviews.

Data analysis

Two independent researchers conducted an initial screening of the titles and then the abstracts of the articles. Any disagreements or uncertainties in the selection of abstracts would be resolved by a third researcher. Eligibility criteria included a focus on nursing, availability in Portuguese, English, or Spanish, and the exclusion of theses, dissertations, reviews, and non-indexed publications. Data were extracted by two researchers and organized in Microsoft Office Excel® spreadsheets, including information about authors, publication year, place of publication, data source, objectives, methodology, and related results. There were no disagreements between the two reviewers that required the inclusion of a third researcher or contact with primary authors.

Results

A total of 403 articles were obtained from the searched databases. Thirty-two duplicate articles were identified and removed. Ultimately, eight articles were included for discussion.

To describe the search/selection process of the articles, an adapted flowchart from the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR) (14) was used, as shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 illustrates the article selection process for each analyzed database. From the final sample, data were extracted and synthesized in Table 2. In an effort to better understand the relationship between nursing and global health diplomacy, the data were categorized into three themes.

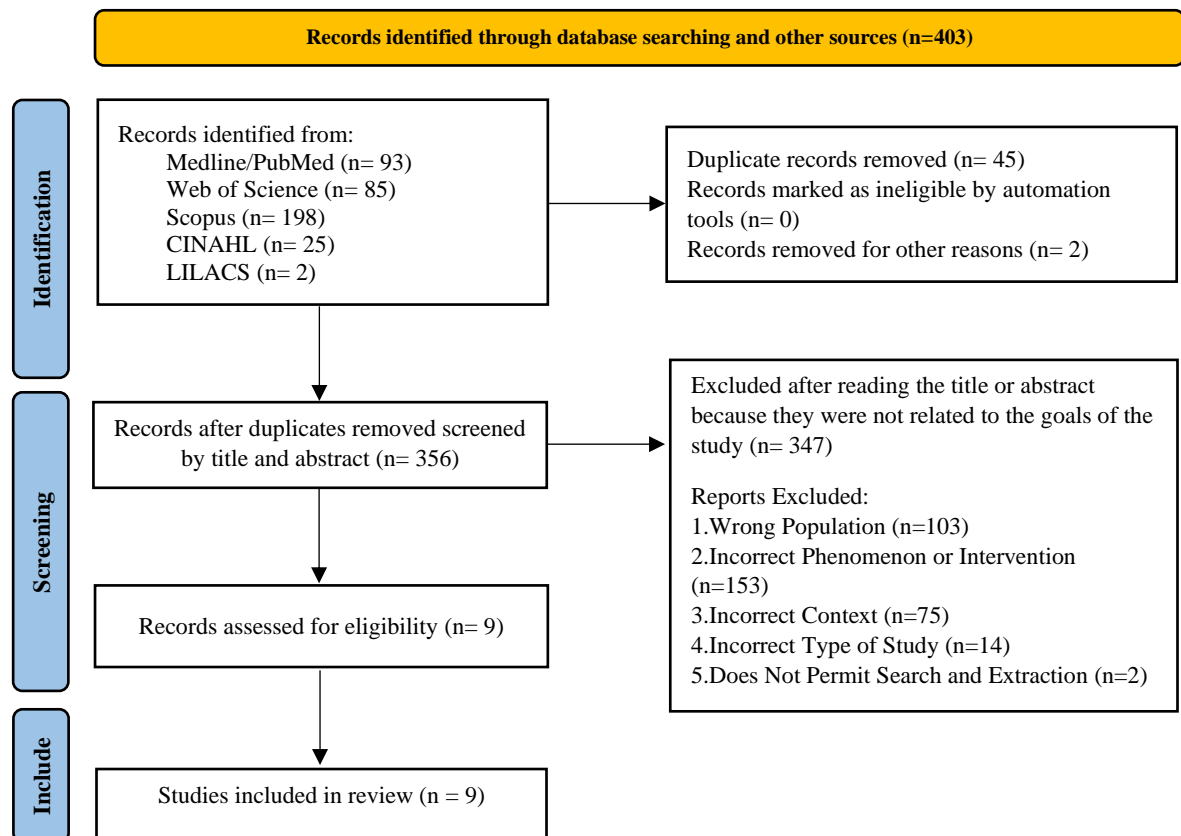


Figure 1. Flowchart referring to the study search and selection process, adapted according to PRISMA-ScR, Brazil, 2024

Table 1. Syntax used in databases

Database	Syntax used
PubMed	- (Nurs) OR (Nursing) - ("Health Diplomacy") OR ("Diplomacy in Health") OR ("Global Health Diplomacy") - ("Global Health") OR ("International Health") OR ("World Health") - ("Nurse Practitioners") OR ("Clinical Nurse Specialists") OR ("Nurse Specialists") OR ("Advanced Practice Nurses") - ("Role of Nurses") OR ("Nursing Contribution") OR ("Nurse's Role") - ("Healthcare Diplomacy") OR ("Nurse Diplomacy")
Scopus	- (Nurs) OR (Nursing) - ("Health Diplomacy") OR ("Diplomacy in Health") OR ("Global Health Diplomacy") - ("Global Health") OR ("International Health") OR ("World Health") - ("Nurse Practitioners") OR ("Clinical Nurse Specialists") OR ("Nurse Specialists") OR ("Advanced Practice Nurses") - ("Role of Nurses") OR ("Nursing Contribution") OR ("Nurse's Role") - ("Healthcare Diplomacy") OR ("Nurse Diplomacy")
Web of Science	- (Nurs) OR (Nursing) - ("Health Diplomacy") OR ("Diplomacy in Health") OR ("Global Health Diplomacy") - ("Global Health") OR ("International Health") OR ("World Health") - ("Nurse Practitioners") OR ("Clinical Nurse Specialists") OR ("Nurse Specialists") OR ("Advanced Practice Nurses") - ("Role of Nurses") OR ("Nursing Contribution") OR ("Nurse's Role") - ("Healthcare Diplomacy") OR ("Nurse Diplomacy")
CINAHL (Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature)	- (Nurs) OR (Nursing) - ("Health Diplomacy") OR ("Diplomacy in Health") OR ("Global Health Diplomacy") - ("Global Health") OR ("International Health") OR ("World Health") - ("Nurse Practitioners") OR ("Clinical Nurse Specialists") OR ("Nurse Specialists") OR ("Advanced Practice Nurses") - ("Role of Nurses") OR ("Nursing Contribution") OR ("Nurse's Role") - ("Healthcare Diplomacy") OR ("Nurse Diplomacy")
LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature)	- (Enfermería) OR (Enfermeras) OR (Enfermeros) - ("Diplomacia en Salud") OR ("Diplomacia en Salud Global") OR ("Diplomacia Sanitaria") - ("Salud Global") OR ("Salud Internacional") OR ("Salud Mundial") - ("Enfermeras Practicantes") OR ("Especialistas en Enfermería Clínica") OR ("Enfermeros Especialistas") OR ("Enfermeros de Práctica Avanzada") - ("Rol de las Enfermeras") OR ("Contribución de la Enfermería") OR ("Papel de la Enfermera") - ("Diplomacia en Atención de la Salud") OR ("Diplomacia de Enfermeras")

Table 2. Summary of identification data, objectives, methods, and main results of the final articles

Order	Article	Objectives	Methods	Main Results	Main Recommendations
S1	Sharafi, S., Cheraghi, M. A., Nasiri, A., & Mahmoudirad, G. (13)	To explore the factors influencing the emergence of the diplomatic role of nursing managers in Iran.	A descriptive qualitative study with an intentional sampling of 16 nursing managers from various organizational levels. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis.	Three main categories were identified: Socio-political and healthcare policy changes: Increased civil society participation and decentralization of the healthcare system created a more favorable environment for the emergence of the diplomatic role of nursing managers. Nurses' dissatisfaction with the healthcare system: Nursing managers play a crucial role in advocating for nurses' interests and improving the quality of nursing care. Development of the nursing profession: Nurses are taking on more proactive roles in leadership and management, requiring diplomatic skills.	The results of this study suggest that the development of diplomatic skills is essential for nursing managers worldwide. Nursing education and training programs should emphasize the development of these skills.

Order	Article	Objectives	Methods	Main Results	Main Recommendations
S2	Li, Q., Gloyd, S., Xu, D., Hu, Y., Liu, H., & Gimbel, S. (14).	To investigate the status of global health education in Chinese universities and the potential for collaboration with nursing schools.	A descriptive qualitative study with an intentional sampling of 15 participants, including educators and global health researchers from Chinese universities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using content analysis.	Global health education in Chinese universities is relatively new and still under development. Key challenges include: Lack of financial resources and infrastructure. Lack of qualified teachers. Lack of recognition of the importance of global health education.	The results of this study suggest that global health education is essential for training nurses to work in a globalized world. Chinese nursing schools should collaborate with universities to develop global health education programs relevant to the country's needs.
S3	Wilson, L., Harper, D. C., Tami-Maury, I., Zarate, R., Salas, S., Farley, J., ... & Ventura, C. (15).	To identify the global health competencies necessary for nurses in the Americas. The study involved a survey to identify essential global health competencies, addressing relevant topics in the field.	Exploratory descriptive study. The final sample included 542 responses in English and 51 nursing faculty members working in schools with undergraduate or higher-level nursing programs.	The study emphasizes the need for academic nursing to identify and define the expected competencies as outcomes of nursing undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The results of this study can be used to guide faculty deliberations on global health competencies to be incorporated into nursing curricula.	The article highlights the competencies necessary for nurses to work in the context of global health in the Americas, providing a comprehensive framework of required skills. The authors suggest that nurses acquire global health competencies to contribute effectively to health improvement in the Americas.
S4	Gimbel, S., Kohler, P., Mitchell, P., & Emami, A. (16)	To highlight the key components of emerging academic structures in global health nursing and explain how this investment can expand nursing's broader involvement in global health development.	The article addresses the creation of academic structures to promote nursing's role in global health policy. The authors explore the necessary academic structures to support nursing in influencing global health policy.	The article emphasizes the importance of establishing academic structures that enable nurses to play an active role in shaping global health policies.	The authors stress the need to develop academic structures that empower nurses to influence global health policies effectively.
S5	Alduraidi, H., Waters, C.M. (17).	To evaluate the health-related quality of life of Palestinian refugees inside and outside of camps in Jordan and its implications for nursing practice in this context.	A descriptive study using questionnaires to collect data on the health-related quality of life of Palestinian refugees and compared those living inside and outside of camps.	The study revealed significant differences in the quality of life between refugees living inside and outside of camps, and that this has important implications for access to healthcare and the well-being of refugees. This is a crucial field for nursing diplomacy.	This article addresses important issues related to global health and nursing by providing insights into the quality of life of refugees. Its findings have valuable implications for global health diplomacy and highlight the critical role of nursing in this context.
S6	McDermott-Levy, R., Leffers, J., Mayaka, J. (18).	To discuss ethical principles and guidelines for nursing practice in global health.	The article is a conceptual review that explores the ethical principles that should guide nursing practice in global health.	The article highlights the importance of ethics in providing nursing care in global contexts, emphasizing equity, respect for local culture, and social justice. The article offers ethical guidelines for nurses involved in global health, including the need to consider cultural and social contexts when providing nursing care in global settings.	This article provides valuable insights into the ethical considerations that should guide nursing practice in the field of global health. It underscores the significance of ethics, cultural sensitivity, and social justice in nursing care, offering ethical guidance for nurses working in global health scenarios.

Order	Article	Objectives	Methods	Main Results	Main Recommendations
S7	Kelly, T., Lazenby, M. (19).	To develop and validate learning domains, competencies, and evaluation criteria for global health clinical immersion practicums in graduate-level nursing programs.	The study involved the identification and validation of learning domains, competencies, and evaluation criteria for clinical immersion practicums in global health.	The article describes the learning domains and competencies necessary for nurses in global health programs, highlighting the importance of specific skills related to global health.	Implications for global health diplomacy include adequately preparing nurses participating in global health programs, and ensuring they are equipped with the necessary skills to address global health challenges.
S8	Preto, V. A., Batista, J. M. F., Ventura, C. A. A., & Mendes, I. A. C. (8).	To reflect on nursing contributions to global health, highlighting the role and responsibilities of nurses in an international context.	The article employs methods of critical analysis and reflection using documents and ordinances to explore nursing contributions to global health.	The results emphasize the contributions and impact of nursing on global health, including promoting health in underserved communities, participating in humanitarian missions, disseminating best nursing care practices internationally, and other relevant topics for nursing in a global context.	The study underscores the importance of nursing in global health diplomacy, demonstrating how nurses play a crucial role in promoting health worldwide. This may include advocating for global health policies, participating in humanitarian initiatives, and building international partnerships to address global health challenges.
S9	Anders, R. (21).	To explore and articulate the importance of clinical nurses' engagement in health policy, address barriers to their participation, and propose strategies.	The study uses a review-based discussion approach, applying the Yoder-Wise Framework for Planned Policy Change to illustrate how nurses can be engaged in health policy, especially during critical times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The article focuses on nurses' advocacy roles, political engagement challenges, and potential use of social media for policy influence, using case examples such as the COVID-19 response to illustrate its points.	Nurses have significant potential to impact health policy, yet face barriers such as limited political knowledge, traditional gender roles, and a lack of confidence. The article highlights that social media is a critical tool for engagement, enabling nurses to amplify their voices and influence health policy effectively. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging nursing expertise and public trust to engage in meaningful policy change. Examples of social media campaigns and professional organization involvement were presented as avenues for effective policy advocacy.	The article recommends that nursing curricula incorporate policy advocacy training, using practical and community-based learning to foster political and policy engagement skills. Nurses are encouraged to use social media strategically to influence policy and engage in professional organizations to build leadership capabilities. Additionally, creating opportunities for mentorship and support from nursing associations can foster more significant involvement in health policy development. The Yoder-Wise Framework should be applied to guide nurses systematically in their efforts to enact policy change.

The findings from the discussed articles have been grouped into thematic categories that respond to the question of nursing's potential for engaging in global health diplomacy:

1. Nursing education and global health integration

This subject category highlights the interconnectedness of global health education, the restructuring of curriculum, and collaboration across different disciplines. It highlights the need for nursing curriculums to

be updated to include thorough global health education and health diplomacy so that nurses are adequately equipped to handle the complex problems posed by global health situations. Furthermore, it emphasizes the significance of interdisciplinary cooperation in nursing education, promoting the idea of working together and exchanging knowledge among many healthcare disciplines to improve global health results (14, 15, 19). The integration of global health into curricula, as well as training in advocacy and political skills, can strengthen

the role of nurses as agents of change in the global health landscape (20).

2. Advancement of skills and knowledge in one's profession and active involvement in diplomatic activities

This theme area integrates the cultivation of specialized abilities with an emphasis on improving health systems and creating policies through health diplomacy. This highlights the crucial role that nurses play in health diplomacy, specifically emphasizing their participation in policy development and global health governance. Nurses may make a significant impact on global health efforts and decisions by combining their clinical experience with strategic planning and a comprehensive perspective on health. This highlights their crucial role in determining health outcomes on an international level (13, 16, 17). Nursing practice, which combines practical experience and direct contact with patients, families, and communities, equips nurses with situational knowledge that is critically important for policy formulation (16, 17, 19, 20). For example, as highlighted in one of the articles (20), frontline nurses, when heard by decision-makers, often contribute significant value to decisions related to healthcare system reform, care coordination, and health information technology, enhancing the sensitivity of such decisions to contexts, needs, and cultures.

3. Ethical practices and cultural sensitivity

This theme focuses on incorporating ethical issues and cultural sensitivity into nursing practices on a global scale. The statement emphasizes the crucial importance of nurses engaging in ethical reasoning and demonstrating respect for other cultures in their professional work. This approach not only guarantees that care is provided in a way that is ethically sound and culturally aware but also strengthens the worldwide influence of nursing by fostering inclusion and comprehension among diverse groups (8,18).

Discussion

The analysis of the findings from the reviewed publications provides insight into the complex relationship between nursing duties and global health diplomacy. Nurses play a crucial role in this situation since they are responsible for both understanding the intricacies of global health problems and promoting fair healthcare practices in various cultural settings (8, 13-19).

The discussion on nursing education emphasizes the immediate requirement for curriculums that go beyond conventional limits, integrating global health concepts that equip nurses to tackle the complex difficulties of a globalized world. The shift in education highlights the importance of providing nurses with the necessary information and abilities to properly function in the international healthcare field, such as ethical skills and diplomacy. This will help create a workforce that is capable of reacting to global health emergencies with expertise and compassion (14, 16, 19).

The articles jointly highlight the crucial significance of professional development in nursing, namely in the areas of policymaking, leadership, and health diplomacy. Nurses are positioned as catalysts for change, whose contributions to global health policy have the potential to greatly impact health outcomes on a global scale. With their distinct viewpoint derived from hands-on patient care and active involvement in the community, they can provide valuable perspectives in conversations about health policy, applying their diplomacy in discussion spaces. They also advocate for policies that accurately address the intricate complexities of global health concerns, especially related to disadvantaged groups (13, 18).

Furthermore, the ethical aspects of nursing work in a global setting are prominently emphasized. Nurses encounter ethical challenges in various cultural contexts, highlighting the importance of ethical reasoning and cultural competency in their profession. Having a strong ethical awareness is crucial in guaranteeing that healthcare delivery is both efficient and culturally

sensitive, while also adhering to the principles of social justice (17).

The prominent obstacles faced by nurses in the field of global health diplomacy, including limited resources and deficiencies in education, demand substantial focus. These obstacles frequently hinder nurses' capacity to deliver the best possible care and successfully participate in health diplomacy. Furthermore, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration highlights the intricate nature of global health problems, which demand a wide range of knowledge and viewpoints (15).

On the other hand, nurses have distinct qualities that are extremely important in global health situations. Their capacity to connect different cultures arises from their direct involvement with varied people, enabling a more profound comprehension of various cultural norms and health practices. In addition, nurses frequently serve as champions for marginalized groups, ensuring that health policies and procedures take into account the needs of all individuals in the community (17,19). Through this, the role of nurses in health diplomacy has great potential.

It is essential for nurses to carry out care practices that are specifically designed for the local setting. This targeted strategy guarantees that health interventions are not only efficient but also enduring and culturally suitable. This capability is especially advantageous in environments with low resources, where traditional health interventions may not be feasible (17, 18, 20,21).

In this manner, although nurses encounter substantial obstacles in the field of global health diplomacy, their contributions remain essential. To overcome these problems, it is important to improve education, provide more resources, and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among nurses. This will enable them to effectively utilize their distinct abilities and perspectives in the field of global health (22).

The amalgamation of research solidifies the indispensable role of nurses within the framework of global health as health diplomats. The statement emphasizes the

necessity of enhancing nursing education, professional development, and ethical norms in order to address global health concerns. As nurses engage more in global health diplomacy, their crucial role in promoting fair healthcare becomes more evident, highlighting the substantial influence of the nursing profession on global health results. In summary, nursing plays a crucial role in advancing global health (9).

Study limitations

While this literature review highlights the challenges and benefits of global health diplomacy for nurses, it is important to acknowledge inherent limitations within the scope of this work. The review focuses on the perspective of nurses, emphasizing their challenges and benefits in global health diplomacy. However, global health diplomacy involves a variety of healthcare professionals and stakeholders. Therefore, the analysis presented here does not address the perspective of other healthcare disciplines. The challenges and benefits discussed may vary depending on the geographical context, healthcare system, and individual nursing experience. Furthermore, our review primarily relies on qualitative data and literature synthesis. The lack of quantitative analysis and statistics may limit the ability to quantify the magnitude of challenges and benefits of global health diplomacy for nurses.

Lastly, the nature of global health diplomacy is subject to constant changes, especially in response to global public health events such as pandemics. The global landscape evolves over time, and the conclusions of this review reflect the state of the art at the time of the analysis.

These limitations underscore the need for further research and a more in-depth analysis of the impact of global health diplomacy on nursing practice. Additionally, the adaptation of the findings from this review to specific contexts should be approached with caution, recognizing the inherent variations within healthcare systems and local realities.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that nursing has tremendous promise in the field of global health diplomacy. Nurses possess a distinctive position that allows them to influence global health outcomes by providing direct care to patients and actively engaging with the community. They have the ability to influence policy, promote international partnerships, and improve global healthcare accessibility, particularly in areas that lack sufficient services. In addition, their responsibilities encompass cultural exchange and the cultivation of leadership skills, which are essential for tackling the intricate difficulties of global health. It is crucial to highlight the active involvement of nurses in global health diplomacy in order to advance global well-being and achieve equal access to healthcare for everyone.

Nurses find global health diplomacy to be a demanding yet fulfilling area of work. In a progressively integrated global environment, nursing practitioners encounter issues that transcend national boundaries. Nevertheless, by surmounting these obstacles, nurses can assume a pivotal position in advancing global health and fortifying healthcare systems on a global scale. Nurses can exert influence on global health policies, engage in collaboration with foreign partners, and enhance healthcare accessibility in remote regions through their involvement in global health diplomacy. In addition, individuals gain significant cultural expertise and cultivate crucial leadership abilities necessary for tackling the intricate issues of global health. Ultimately, global health diplomacy provides nurses with an exceptional opportunity to effectively influence the well-being of populations on a global scale. Nurses may make a substantial contribution to creating a better and fairer world by embracing this ever-changing industry, where everyone has access to healthcare. Hence, it is crucial for the nursing profession to maintain an active involvement in global health diplomacy, advocating for global welfare and adhering to the core ideals of universal health.

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Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

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