



## Personal Health Record: the Nursing Outlook

Prontuário Pessoal de Saúde: a perspectiva da Enfermagem

Prontuario Personal de Salud: la perspectiva de Enfermería

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### ABSTRACT

**Descritores:** Nursing;  
Medical Informatics;  
Medical Record System;  
Communication;  
Information Technology

Personal Health Record is a way of giving the power to the individual to manage its own health related problems. Nurses would acquire the skills to assist the individuals in taking advantages of prevention and to help them manage their health related problems to reach high level of health and quality of living.

### RESUMO

**Keywords:** Enfermagem;  
Informática em Saúde;  
Registro Eletrônico de  
Saúde; Comunicação;  
Tecnologia da Informação

O Prontuário Pessoal é uma forma de poder dar mais poder aos indivíduos, para que possam gerenciar sua própria saúde e os problemas relacionados. Os enfermeiros podem adquirir habilidades para prestar assistência, utilizando tais ferramentas para obter vantagens na prevenção de doenças e para auxiliar os pacientes em busca de bem estar e qualidade de vida.

### RESUMEN

**Descriptores:**  
Enfermería; Informática  
en Salud; Historia Clínica  
Electrónica;  
Comunicación; Tecnología  
de la Información

El Registro Personal de Salud es una forma de poder capacitar a las personas para que puedan gestionar su propia salud y los problemas relacionados. Las enfermeras pueden adquirir habilidades para ayudar, utilizando estas herramientas para obtener ventajas en la prevención de la enfermedad y ayudar a los pacientes en busca de bienestar y calidad de vida.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nursing is about caring and the focus always had being the patient and or client. In the early years, nurses used to practice care delivery without formal structure and recognized methodology. Reading nursing history, it is clear that care of the ill and injured individuals has been done since the beginning of human life and most of time the descriptions emphasize that this was a women's role.

The era of Florence Nightingale gave us methods: theories, models, formalisms were constructed and nursing schools were developed building a knowledge base of what could be effective and necessary to improve nursing as science and art.

When information and communication technology was included as a tool in the healthcare facilities, the process of care delivery changed. The decision making process, control and evaluation of nursing care was significantly altered and nursing informatics established as an area of knowledge.

Nonetheless, the most important aspect remains as the constant central focus in nursing evolution throughout the years, history and cultures: the patient. At one side we have the focus on the patient and at the other side, it is information that drives the care and delivery processes.

Accurate and timely access to appropriate information is mandatory to perform the variety of activities that involve patient care, including administration, consulting, education, training and research. Time has come where information is available and access to scientific development is facilitated by many different kinds of technology resources worldwide.

Currently, the practice of nursing informatics is broad, ranging from clinical care settings to management of health services, health problems, research, training and education. Technology plays an important role and professionals around the world became more aware of possibilities to apply technology resources to develop dynamic decisions in caring for clients/patients.

The International Medical Informatics Association, Nursing Informatics Special Interest Group (IMIA NI SIG) defines nursing informatics as the science and practice integrates nursing, its information and knowledge and their management with information and communication technologies to promote the health of people, families and communities worldwide. It supports nursing research, education, management and practice in order to enable the delivery of quality healthcare that is patient centered, safe, effective, efficient, equitable and timely (<http://imia-medinfo.org/ni/>).

A variety of patient care systems are managed by nurses embracing information networks, communication skills together with an ability to work both in practice and administrative positions in a variety of clinical and community settings. From Nursing Information Systems, Caring Systems and Nursing Components of Electronic Health Record to Decision Support Systems and Telenursing, we are evolving our interest to Personal Health Record or Person-Centered Health Record. This transformative initiative is obvious because the person is

the center of healthcare, the record exist because of the person and professionals dedicate several years of their educational life to learn how to take better care of people.

In this milieu, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must provide applications such as decision support systems, quality management, clinical guidelines and telenursing applications addressed to promote evidence, patient safety and best practice for nursing care delivery.

## OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this article is to discuss some aspects of the Personal Health Record under the nursing point of view, considering its importance as a tool to be more explored to enhance the control and quality of health and life of individuals.

## DISCUSSION

According to Barnard<sup>(1)</sup>, "one of the major reasons why nursing has increased its roles and responsibility this century originates from the introduction of various technology resources into nursing practice. Today nurses are responsible for increasingly machine orientated health care dominated by administrative and bureaucratic structures. Nurses in all specialties are required to care for patients and develop the technical knowledge not only to manipulate machinery but interpret the world around them."

Nurses adopt technological resources in their daily activities and we must continue to ensure that information technology remains an integral part of professional practice considering ICT devices as instruments to acquire the information required, to access updated information, to get closer to their patients and be integrated, participative and responsible for health status and quality of life of patients and clients.

As technology continues to evolve, nursing practice methods will also need to adapt in order to take advantage of automation applications. Health information systems consist of people, information, procedures, hardware and software. Working together, all these components can accomplish a set of specific functions to integrate and maximize the benefits of human and technology capabilities.

Nothing is more contrary to the healthcare care philosophy and mission than causing injury or harm to the individuals who search for care. Consequently, a major interest is about resources to assure patient safety<sup>(2)</sup>. The quality of care is related to the scope of knowledge and information that healthcare providers can easily access to underpin the clinical decision making process. The information we share, we record and we analyze is the main aspect of nursing informatics and it will support the evaluation of our contribution to the healthcare services. It also allows us to develop new models that could better utilize resources to improve quality of care and professional performance<sup>(3)</sup>.

Technology is available to support nursing and health

care to individuals, groups and communities. The telecommunication resources can be used in different activities such as monitoring medications, fluids and feedings, elaborating physiological examination, providing instruction and helping patients to understand medical procedures, reducing distress, doubts to promote treatment adherence.

Worldwide, individuals are incorporating technologies resources in the daily life in such degree that is not anymore understandable life with any of these resources such as mobile phones, notebooks, iPods, iPads, ATM machines, among others. The market grows every second and healthcare area is taking advantage of these resources - sometimes in a slow speed sometimes with no purpose, control and governance, sometimes with a huge success resulting as ascertained concept of improvement to the delivered care.

Considering the range of telehealth resources available, electronic personal health record and their capacity to enhance patient empowerment, nurses play an important role as patient advocates promoting its use in way to personalized feedback to care needs.

In many of the European countries in the last years, several eHealth initiatives were launched to share health related data at the national and the international level. Citizens shall be the major beneficiaries of such projects. It is expected that a better management of information, the use of a continuity of care record, smoother administrative processes and ePrescriptions will help controlling costs, and thus have effect on insurance taxes. Quality and safety of care will also be improved, with better availability of information and decision-support systems. Access to the record will be possible by the citizens, and they will be able to grant accesses to care providers, thus empowering patients and reinforcing privacy. It must at least facilitate the access of emergency data, of information allowing improving safer care using tools that can provide decision-support help, of improving administrative process<sup>(4)</sup>.

In most of the European countries, in 2060 the non-working population will be higher than the working population<sup>(5)</sup>. This would have a direct impact on the way the people could be treated when they would have health related problem to solve. The empowerment of the population regarding health situation will be the only way

that some could be helped. New roles for nurses will appear such as how to help the people to get the right information at the right time about their own health status, and how to inform individuals about the easiest and cheapest way to solve their health problems. How a laic individual or family member could help in a safe way an handicap or injured person? Nurses have to prepare today what would be the tools to empower tomorrow persons about health related problems. There is a need to change the paradigm of caring to the healthy individuals and not just to the sick, ill and injured. This means that there is a real need to increase the prevention instead of caring; this was stated since a long time but never was financed this way by governs. It is also a way to change from episode of care to long life health management with the help of ehealth, Personal Health Record managed and maintain by the person him/herself. As the population is becoming older and older, the costs for chronic diseases are and will stay the highest. It is common knowledge that most of the total costs are dedicated to the individuals with chronic diseases. If adequate measures, strategic plans and governance are not being decided and implemented at this right moment, the future will bring a higher proportion of individuals demanding needs of care. The challenge to control the cost of health care, the insufficient number of providers and the quality of life will be proportional to the expectancy of life and the evolution of science and technology. Investments must be in balance to assure equity and sustainability.

## CONCLUSIONS

At a time when the tendency is toward a consumer health informatics, nurses must be able to identify quality information that will construct useable and useful nursing knowledge for care delivery, independently of the technological means applied.

Nurses role are and will be not only caring but much more conducting prevention. Nurses will be the center for coordination across the health care providers, they will be a major help for patient and family education. To empower this process, nurses need to conduct research and contributed to evidence based not only on caring but also on prevention.

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