THE MAP OF THE RHEUMATOLOGY NURSE CLINICAL AND RESEARCH INTERVENTIONS IN THE VALENCIAN REGION (SPAIN)

Carmen Núñez Herranz1, Inés Cánovas Olmos1, Elena Grau García1, Amelia Carbonell Jordí2, Jenny de la Torre-Aboki2, Oscar Aranega Rodríguez2, Isabel Balaguer Trull2, Catalina Caño2, Carmen María Francis Amorós2, Loli Gil Gallego1, Alicia Gómez Clán3, Elizabeth Marín Martín10, V Núñez-Monje11, Nieves Martínez Abella12, Nurses Working Group of the Valencian Society of Rheumatology (GE-SVR).

Objectives: To describe and quantify the rheumatology Nursing interventions in each Rheumatology department which has not ever been described nor quantified.

Methods: A descriptive study was performed by the completion of an online questionnaire with a list of clinical and research intervention. The questionnaire was sent to the Head of Rheumatology Department of 33 public hospitals from the Valencian Region.

Results: 32 hospitals of the Valencian Region fulfilled the questionnaire: 15 from Valencia, 13 from Alicante and 4 from Castellón. 50% of the hospitals had a Rheumatology nurse in their team. In those hospitals, 50% had only 1 Rheumatology nurse working at the moment. The maximum Rheumatology nurses working in the same hospitals were 4; 2 hospitals used to have a Rheumatology nurse but do not have it anymore at this moment. 11 hospitals have an auxiliary nurse (3 of them without nurses and 8 with nurses). The year of incorporation of the Rheumatology nurse in the Department was quite heterogeneous, being the earliest in 1992 and the last incorporation in 2017.

The nurses worked mainly in a Rheumatology department full time (68.75%). The 81% of the hospitals had a specific nursing agenda but only 7 hospitals had a monographic nurse-led clinic (osteoarthritis nurse-led clinic -25%, intravenous treatments nurse-led clinic -12.5% - or cardiovascular risk nurse-led clinic -6.25%)

Nurses clinical interventions are very heterogeneous covering the patient clinical management and practice nurses intervention activities. Nurses organized patient education workshops in 25% hospitals. In 11 hospitals, nurse undertook teaching activities. 56% participating in scientific workshops/congress, 44% teaching undergraduate nurses/registered nurses and 37.5% teaching other healthcare professionals.

In 11 hospitals, nurses undertook research activities. In 2 hospitals an specific research nurse was available. 56% of nurses participating in clinical trials, 50% participated in research projects and 50% participated in scientific congress. 25% of nurses lead research projects.

In 12 hospitals, nurses belong to a scientific society; in 11 hospitals, nurses participated in regional, national and/ or international nurses working groups.

Conclusion: In at least 50% of the hospitals from the Valencian Region, nurse activity was registered. There are heterogeneous clinical activities performed by nurses. This fact raised the issue of the importance of having unified criteria for nurse’s intervention and competences framework comparable in each and every hospital. Teaching and research were also a common interventions mentioned. These activities are necessary for a constant recording and updating of the nurses and will help to gain the necessary visibility for the rheumatology nurses.

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