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Editorial

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## ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING: COOPERATION BETWEEN BRAZIL AND GERMANY FOR EXCHANGE AND RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

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The direct and nearly unlimited availability of information and the variety of communication tools to exchange over country and continental borders within seconds are major characteristics of 21st century societies, not only but especially since the Covid-19 pandemic. Academic research, teaching and learning have changed in a fundamental way through this period. Researchers, students, and teaching personnel have become used to bridging distances through digital communication technologies. Today's possibilities of combining digital and face-to-face encounters in research and teaching is a great achievement for the internationalization process of universities.

Along with this movement, the Post-Graduate Program in Biosciences and Health (master's and doctorate level) of Western Paraná State University (Unioeste) cooperates with the Department of Health Services Research and Nursing Sciences, located at Bielefeld Universities' School of Public Health, a pioneer in the postgraduate education of public health professionals at master's and doctoral level in Germany, and the National School of Public Health/Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Ensp/Fiocruz). In the frame of the project "Strengthening Advanced Nursing Practice and Interprofessional Collaboration in Primary Health Care (APN-PHC)", cooperation is made possible. Supported by Capes and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), senior researchers and junior scientists from Unioeste, Fiocruz and Bielefeld University are jointly conducting a comparative study on the developments of Advanced Practice Nursing (APN) in Primary Health Care (PHC) in Brazil and Germany. Online meetings of the scientists involved in Brazil as well as Germany, along with mission-study travels where the scientists visit one another's countries, enable the group to intensively discuss and exchange with other researchers and postgraduate students in the participating institutions.

The study's objective is to identify possibilities and obstacles to APN implementation from a stakeholder perspective. It adds to an ongoing discussion about the contribution of extended nursing roles to better access and resolution in primary health care and will inform future research and policies in the two countries where APN in PHC is not yet widely conceptualized and implemented<sup>1,2</sup>.

According to the International Council of Nurses (ICN) *Advanced Practice Nursing [...] is viewed as advanced nursing interventions that influence clinical healthcare outcomes for individuals,*

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*families, and diverse populations. Advanced Practice Nursing is based on graduate education and preparation along with the specification of central criteria and core competencies for practice*<sup>3:6</sup>. APN implementation requires specific regulation and recognition in the different health systems. Furthermore, an entrance requirement is a master's level education, something which is recommended by the ICN as it implies the expansion of professional skills, autonomy, and responsibility of nurses.

However, Advanced Nursing practice in PHC has been developed unequally in different countries<sup>4</sup>. Having its origins in the United States, APN roles are mainly implemented in Anglo-Saxon countries such as the US, Canada, the United Kingdom and New Zealand<sup>5-7</sup>. Other countries, such as Spain<sup>8</sup> and Finland<sup>9</sup> began to design APN roles in PHC and further develop collaborations with other health professionals, although they have not widely implemented the function. Brazil and Germany belong to a third group of countries where the implementation of expanded roles for nurses is still in its infancies.

In the Brazilian higher education system, it is common to enable for doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers to study abroad. However, the system still lacks the insertion of students and researchers from other countries<sup>10</sup>, in particular those from institutions outside of Latin America. The above-mentioned research and exchange project enables a new, bilateral, and equitable partnership. Exchanges of professors, post-doctoral researchers and doctoral students will be possible virtually, and during in-person visits in Brazil and Germany. In this year, Unioeste and ENSP already received the research coordinator of the study in Germany for the first work mission in Brazil. Currently (July/August 2022), two German students of the public health doctorate at Bielefeld University are visiting health services, developing research activities together with Brazilian researchers and participating in the activities of the Post-Graduate Programs of Unioeste and Ensp/Fiocruz. As a part of the research project, German and Brazilian researchers jointly collected data via online meetings as well as face to face focus groups with Brazilian experts.

The next phase of the project follows the work and study missions of Brazilian researchers and students in Germany, during which the data collection in Germany will be conducted. These exchanging activities include the participation in in-person and/or online seminars, subject classes, and data collection, and they strengthen the bounds among senior and junior researchers and encourages post-graduation students to apply for scholarships and travel abroad to study and learn about other realities.

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