

TUESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 1999

Debate

79

This house believes that nursing research is irrelevant

E.W.C. Ambaum. *University Medical Center Utrecht, Department of Internal Medicine, P.O. Box 85500, B02.239 3508 GA Utrecht, Netherlands*

The ultimate goal of any profession is to improve the practice of its members so that the services provided to its clientele will have the greatest impact. Any profession seeking to enhance its professional image undertakes the continual development of a scientific body of knowledge fundamental to its practice (Polit&Hungler 1991).

Research has an important role to play in helping nursing to establish a scientific base to its practice. Research is also important in the decision making process; it can uncover sound, reliable information upon which to base the decision-making. Because nurses today are being asked more than before to document their role in the delivery of health services. Like other healthcare professionals they make decisions regarding clinical interventions, program designs and resource allocation. Because of its systematic approach, research offers a means of improving clinical practice and ensuring optimal patient care outcomes (Fitch&Thompson 1996).

However, it's realistic to add some marginal note to nursing research in relation with its practical utility, because it's only since 25 years nurses are capable to give nursing research a body. Before 1970 nursing didn't possess any significant research base and could not be said to have a body of knowledge unique to itself. Nursing struggled with tradition and rituals and a fundamental problem existed in translating the findings of research into practice (Walsh&Ford 1992). Nursing research was also facing the medical research who had already a history of many centuries and the fight of emancipation had to be fought. Now, at the frontier of a new millennium, nurses are more and more convinced of the importance of nursing research and its practical implication. So, the position that nursing research is irrelevant, is not only discriminating against the nursing profession but also an oldfashioned way of looking at nurses as angels of mercy.

80

Abstract not received.