Correspondence

Is it bachelor of nursing, bachelor of nursing science, or bachelor of science in nursing?

Sir,
As a nursing student, I often get many questions from other students in other disciplines, which sometimes make me confused how to answer. We often argue about the difference between bachelor of nursing science (BNS), bachelor of science in nursing (BSN/BScN), and bachelor of nursing (BN) with no conclusion to explain whether nursing is a part of science, or nursing is a science.

Many nursing institutions nowadays offer same nursing programs, but having those distinguished terminologies. As a consequence, students might have many different nursing titles behind their names after graduation. Thus, it leads to the big question whether all those terms have the same meaning or not. Some considerations might be needed to rethink of terminologies.

First, BSN/BScN, means nursing is a part of science. Science serves nursing well. By this term, it also remains that science as a resource of nursing, which advances nursing by providing theoretical and conceptual frameworks to guide research and practice. Science at this point has a contribution in giving structure to nursing. However, science might potentially limit the scope of nursing practice and nurse-patient relationship.

Second, BNS, by definition means nursing science that is system of knowledge based on scientific principles, concerned with the observation and classification of facts and establishing verifiable theories, concepts and general laws comprising the theoretical core of nursing knowledge.[1] Nursing science is also defined as “the substantive, discipline-specific knowledge that focuses on the human universe health process articulated in the nursing frameworks and theories.”[2] By this term, it also remains that science is the foundation of nursing. Science places particular demands on nursing and has the potential to distort the patient-nurse relationship. It confers a particular way of relating, a template for thought, and does not reflect the reality of nursing.[3] It is because science allows for predictability and certainty that are observable and measurable. On the other hand, science has characteristics, namely:

(1) Must show a certain coherence,
(2) Is concerned with definite fields of knowledge,
(3) Is preferably expressed in universal statements,
(4) The statements of science must be true or probably true,
(5) The statements of science must be logically ordered,
(6) Science must explain its investigation and arguments.[4]

It could be said that science is a dynamic search to understand objects, but it does not extend to nurse-patient relationship in nursing.

Besides, science has been classified in several ways including pure or basic science, natural science, human or social science, and applied or practical science. To define nursing science regarding those classifications is actually dependent on the philosophical interpretation.

The last is BN, which has been interpreted in many ways, as a verb, noun, or a participle.[2,3] Some may think that nursing is an art and science, or scientific art. It may also be described as nursing science or nursing as science. It could be said nursing has a broad definition.

Given the different definitions and explanations among the three terminologies. Further explanation to unifying those terms is needed, especially for providing nursing students knowledge and understanding about the future direction of nursing, otherwise terminologies have no meaning at all.

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