

## Abstract

Kristín Björnsdóttir, Marga Thome (2006). Sérfræðingar í hjúkrun: Skilgreining, viðurkenning og nám. *Tímarit hjúkrunarfræðinga*, Ritryndar fræðigreinar, 1(1), 28-36.

**[Specialist in Nursing: Role, Regulations and Education. *Nursing Journal*, 1(1), 28-36, 2006 (In Icelandic).]**

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This paper describes the roles of specialists in nursing, ways in which their services are certified and regulated and the characteristics of the knowledge and education that specialists in nursing require are discussed. A comprehensive literature search led to a variety of sources from a number of European countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Swiss and the Netherlands in addition to literature from North America and Australia. Important work on the clarification of specialists in nursing has also been done by the International Council of Nursing (ICN) and The European Federation of Nurses Associations (EFN). Results showed that there is no current consensus on definitions, regulations, roles, education nor practice of nurse specialists between countries, neither in Europe nor in the Anglo-Saxon world. There are even large differences between regions and states of the same country. In comparison to the education of specialist in other practice oriented disciplines in Iceland, e.g. psychologists or physicians, in nursing more emphasis is placed on theoretical knowledge than on clinical experience in the education of nurse's specialists. Differences in traditions and positions with regard to preparing specialist nurses for practice are described and discussed. A number of suggestions are made regarding the development of specialise education in Iceland.

Keywords: Nurse specialist, advanced practice nurse, definitions, roles, regulation, education.

During the Workgroup of European Nurse Researchers (WERN) workgroup meeting held in Dublin 29th June – 1st July 2005, three WENR representatives formed a group to explore the current status of Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) in Europe and shared the following activities between them:

Marga Thome, Iceland, conducted a literature review together with Kristin Björnsdóttir, both Faculty of Nursing, University of Iceland. The purpose was to give an overview on the definitions, key characteristics of APN's, the roles of specialist in nursing, regulation and certification of specialist nursing services and to compare the knowledge and education of specialists with an emphasis to APN development in Europe and in Anglosaxon countries. The abstract and reference can be [viewed...](#)

Furthermore, Marga Thome explored the situation of APN in Iceland, Sweden and the Netherlands through personal contacts.

Rebecca Spirig, Switzerland participated in the ICN study on APN ([see book publication of Affara & Schober \(2006\) at Blackwell Publishing](#)) and offered views from Switzerland. She installed a APN support programm at the University Hospital Basel and is currently working on an APN-Network accross Switzerland .

Marta Líma Basto, Portugal offered views on APN from Portugal and impressions she gained by traveling the UK and Switzerland. By visiting Universities in different European countries, she became aware of different conceptual frameworks behind APN education- and practice. On one site, education of APN's was mainly to transfer competencies from physicians on drug prescriptions to nursing and there was lack of a nursing perspective, resulting in a practice with no outcomes different from medical care. On an other site, ANP's education and practice was based on a conceptual framework that included nursing values and central nursing concepts and this resulted in a difference in patient care with regard to wellbeing of the ill persons and their families. It is suggested that countries that are still forming their approach in education and practice of APN's, can gain by learning more about the experience at Basel University and University Hospital.

During the process of the work it appeared that the Irish Nursing Association has done commendable work on the role and regulation of APN's that could also serve a model for other countries.

The group will continue its work on exploring the role, regulation and education of APN and is grateful for contribution of any grey literature or information on APN in Europe, to be send to Marga Thome, University of Iceland, [marga@hi.is](mailto:marga@hi.is)

**References with article by**

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