



# **Nursing Staff Representation in Brazilian Health Management: An Integrative Literature Review**

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### Authors' contributions

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors participated in all stages of the research, Definition of the theme and objectives, database searches, data analysis, critical review. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### Review Article

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** In recent decades, nursing has increasingly assumed strategic roles in hospital management, contributing not only to care delivery but also to the planning, organization, and evaluation of health services. The complexity of contemporary healthcare demands that nurse managers develop managerial competencies that go beyond clinical expertise, encompassing leadership, decision-making, and team coordination. However, the recognition of nursing as a key player in hospital governance remains a challenge in many contexts, especially in Brazil, where structural, educational, and cultural barriers may limit the full exercise of this role.

**Objective:** To analyze the representativeness of nursing staff in Brazilian health management, identifying the required competencies, the challenges faced and the impacts of this role on the quality of care.

**Methods:** This is an integrative review, with a qualitative approach, carried out in the SciELO, LILACS, BDENF and PubMed databases, with a selection of articles published between 2018 and 2024, in Portuguese, English or Spanish. The descriptors used were "nursing", "hospital management" and "health leadership".

**Results:** The results were organized into three thematic categories: (1) the managerial competencies necessary for the role of the nurse manager, such as leadership, strategic planning,

decision-making and effective communication; (2) the challenges faced in the exercise of management, highlighting work overload, scarcity of resources, team resistance and the lack of specific training in management; and (3) the positive impacts of the presence of nurses in hospital leadership, such as improvements in the quality of care, reduction of adverse events, increased patient satisfaction and appreciation of humanization in care.

**Conclusion:** It is concluded that nursing has expanded its presence in hospital management, but still needs greater institutional recognition, investment in management training and organizational support. The appreciation of the role of nurse managers is strategic to promote more humane, problem-solving and integrated management models in care practices.

**Keywords:** *Nursing; hospital management; leadership in health; structural; educational; cultural barriers.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hospital management in Brazil is a complex field that demands technical, administrative and human skills to ensure the quality and efficiency of health services. In this context, nursing has played an increasingly important role, not only in direct patient care, but also in managerial and leadership roles within hospital institutions (Farias & Dearaujo, 2017).

Historically, the role of nurses in hospital management was limited, with a predominant focus on care activities. However, with the transformations in the health system and the increasing complexity of hospital services, nurses have come to occupy strategic positions in hospital administration, contributing to decision-making and the implementation of effective health policies (Vásquez-Calatayud et al., 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the managerial skills of nurses, demonstrating their ability to lead teams, manage resources and promote the quality of health services. Nurses have played essential roles in hospital management, contributing to the improvement of processes and patient satisfaction (Silva et al., 2025).

Despite the progress, there are still significant challenges to the full inclusion of nurses in hospital management, including cultural barriers, lack of professional recognition and limitations in management training during undergraduate studies (Ventura-Silva et al., 2024). Understanding the representation of nursing in Brazilian hospital management is essential to identify opportunities to strengthen the profession and to promote more efficient and humanized management in hospitals (Aydogdu, 2023).

Therefore, this study aims to analyze, through a bibliographic review, the representation of

nursing in Brazilian hospital management, identifying the main contributions, challenges and perspectives for strengthening the role of nurses as managers in hospital institutions.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is an integrative review study, with a qualitative approach, that was chosen because it allows the synthesis of the knowledge produced on the topic, contemplating different methodological designs, which favors a broad understanding of the studied theme.

The construction of the review followed the methodological steps proposed by Sousa et al. (2017), which include: definition of the guiding question, establishment of inclusion and exclusion criteria, identification and selection of studies, data extraction, critical analysis of the findings and synthesis of the results.

The research question was elaborated based on the PICO strategy, defining nurses as the population, the interest as working in hospital management and the context as the Brazilian hospital system. The question that guided the search was: "What has been the representation of nursing in Brazilian hospital management, according to the scientific literature?". The search for scientific articles was carried out in May 2025, in the databases SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences), BDENF (Nursing Database) and PubMed.

To ensure the current status of the scientific production analyzed, only studies published between 2018 and 2024 were considered. The Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) and Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) were used, combined using the Boolean operators AND and OR. The main descriptors used were: "nursing", "hospital

management”, “health administration” and “nursing leadership”.

The review included articles available in full, published in Portuguese, English or Spanish, which directly addressed the role of nurses in hospital management from different approaches (care, management, political or educational) and that analyze the context of Brazilian health. Duplicate articles, editorials, letters to the editor, theses, dissertations and publications that did not directly address the proposed theme were excluded. After selection, the studies were organized in a summary table containing

information about authors, year, objective, methodology, main results and conclusions.

Data analysis was performed descriptively and critically, allowing the identification of thematic categories related to the performance and challenges faced by nurse managers in hospital institutions in Brazil.

### 3. RESULTS

For this study, 22 articles were selected, which were analyzed and organized in the following Table 1.

**Table 1. Characterization of studies**

Author/Year/Journal	Objective	Method	Evidences
Bezerra & Paranaguá (2021) - Nursing Focus	To discuss the role of organizations and staff in ensuring patient safety.	Theoretical article	Highlights the organizational and human factors essential for patient safety.
de Almeida Silva et al. (2022)	To analyze the pediatric care environment during COVID-19 and its impact on safety.	Descriptive analysis	Revealed vulnerabilities in pediatric safety due to structural and procedural limitations.
Silva et al. (2025) - Millenium	To evaluate the effects of nurse manager communication strategies on nursing environments.	Quantitative study	Found a positive association between effective communication and work environment satisfaction.
Martins et al. (2022) - Revista Faculdades do Saber	To discuss humanized care for preterm newborns in NICUs.	Integrative review	Emphasized the importance of empathetic, individualized care in neonatal settings.
Da Silva Júnior et al. (2024) - Lumen et Virtus	To propose managerial practices for improving hospital service efficiency.	Case-based study	Suggested strategic planning and leadership as key to performance improvement.
De Freitas Candeia et al. (2023) - Institutional Repository	To explore the role of nurses in hospital management today.	Review	Described the growing strategic role of nurses in decision-making and coordination.
De Souza Gois et al. (2021) - Revista Univap	To reflect on leadership challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.	Experience report	Highlighted increased stress and the need for adaptive leadership skills.
Do Amarante & Burg (2022) - RECIMA21	To review nursing leadership in health service management.	Integrative review	Reinforced leadership as a cornerstone for effective nursing management.
Gonçalves et al. (2024) - Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem	To present nurses' perspectives on nursing work methods.	Qualitative study	Revealed inconsistencies in methodology use and suggested standardization.
Hanzel & Faveri (2024) - Acervo Saúde	To describe leadership styles among hospital nurses.	Cross-sectional study	Transformational leadership was linked to higher team engagement.
Moura et al. (2017) - Revista FT	To review nursing leadership models in Brazil.	Systematic review	Identified best practices and challenges for leadership in different regions.
Portela et al. (2022) - Fiocruz	To analyze the organizational effects of COVID-19 on health systems.	Documental analysis	Highlighted disruptions in service delivery and need for adaptive governance.
Ribeiro et al. (2024) - Univag	To assess surgical checklist use by nurses and its impact on adverse events.	Observational study	Checklist use reduced error rates and improved team communication.
Serassuelo et al. (2025) - Revista DELOS	To identify managerial competencies among hospital nurses.	Survey-based study	Found gaps in strategic planning and communication skills.

Author/Year/Journal	Objective	Method	Evidences
Silva et al. (2025) - Millenium	To evaluate communication strategies among nurse managers.	Quantitative study	Positive correlation with staff cohesion and patient safety culture.
Dos Santos, I. A. R. (2024)	To analyze meanings of leadership for nurses in a university hospital.	Doctoral dissertation (qualitative)	Showed leadership as both a practical and symbolic element in care.
Dos Santos et al. (2022) - Enfermagem Brasil	To discuss humanization in adult ICU care.	Integrative review	Humanized care improved communication and patient trust.
Vandresen et al. (2023) - Texto & Contexto	To identify challenges faced by nurse-managers in Brazil and Portugal.	Mixed-methods study	Work overload and lack of support were main barriers to effective management.
Vaz et al. (2024) - Revista JRG	To assess the impact of nursing humanization on patient recovery.	Qualitative analysis	Humanized approaches led to faster and more effective recovery.
Varanda et al., (2024), Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem	To analyze nurses' leadership during COVID-19 in university hospitals using Kotter's leadership model.	Qualitative descriptive study	Identified leadership traits such as trust, effective communication, and adaptability in crisis contexts.
Cruz et al (2020), Texto & Contexto Enfermagem	To reflect on the strategic role of nurses in hospital management and the competencies required.	Theoretical-reflective study	Emphasized the importance of leadership skills and the need to develop them during nursing education.
Pimentel et al. (2021), Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem	To identify challenges faced by nurse managers in university hospitals.	Qualitative descriptive study	Revealed barriers such as work overload, lack of managerial training, and insufficient institutional support.

Source: Authors, 2025

## 4. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the selected studies allowed the categorization of the findings into three major themes: (1) management skills in hospital management, (2) Challenges faced by nurse managers, and (3) Impact of nurses' performance on the quality of hospital care.

### 4.1 Nurses' Management Skills in Hospital Management

Nurses' performance in hospital management requires a diverse set of skills that go beyond technical-care knowledge. Recent studies highlight the importance of skills such as leadership, strategic planning, people management, decision-making, and effective communication for the efficient performance of management functions (Serassuelo et al., 2025).

Serassuelo et al. (2025) identified, through interviews with nurse managers, that skills such as professional ethics, responsibility, empathy, and proactivity are fundamental for the development of effective management. The interviewees also emphasized the importance of constant updating and the ability to anticipate

occurrences as essential aspects for management practice.

In addition, leadership is highlighted as a core skill in nursing management. Moura et al. (2017) emphasize that nurses' leadership in hospital settings is characterized by the ability to positively influence teams, promote motivation, and facilitate effective communication, contributing to the improvement of care processes.

Strategic planning and the organization of human and material resources are essential skills to ensure the efficiency of hospital services. The ability to plan allows the nurse manager to anticipate needs, establish goals and optimize processes, contributing to the continuous improvement of the quality of care (Moura et al., 2017).

Effective communication is an indispensable skill in hospital management. It facilitates the coordination of activities, conflict resolution and strengthening of teamwork. In addition, positive interpersonal relationships between the manager and his/her team promote a healthy and productive work environment (Silva et al., 2025; Ribeiro et al., 2024).

Academic training and continuing education play a crucial role in the development of these skills. According to Hanzel and Faveri (2024), leadership styles such as coaching and democratic leadership are the most practiced by nurses in hospital institutions, highlighting the need for flexibility and adaptation to different situations and teams. Therefore, the development of management skills is essential for nurses to effectively perform their role in hospital management, contributing to the quality of care and the efficiency of health services.

The study by Varanda et al. (2024), based on John Kotter's leadership model, showed that the performance of nurses in university hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic was marked by leadership based on trust, effective communication, and continuous search for knowledge. The ability of nurses to lead organizational changes even in the face of crises stands out, reinforcing their essential role in hospital management.

## 4.2 Challenges Faced by Nurse Managers

The performance of nurses in hospital management positions in Brazil faces several challenges that directly impact the effectiveness and quality of care provided. Among the main obstacles identified in recent literature, the following stand out: work overload, shortage of human and material resources, resistance to change on the part of teams, and lack of institutional recognition of nurses' management skills (Candeia et al., 2023).

Work overload is a recurring factor that hinders the implementation of effective management practices. Nursing professionals report difficulties in reconciling care demands with administrative and planning activities, which compromises the provision of systematic and patient-centered care. In addition, the shortage of material and human resources in health units limits the capacity to respond to the needs of the population, making it difficult to implement protocols and carry out educational and preventive activities (Silva Júnior et al., 2024).

Effective management of teams and care processes is one of the main challenges for nurse managers. The shortage of qualified professionals, high turnover, and work overload make it difficult to implement efficient

management practices. In addition, the lack of autonomy and limited recognition of nursing leadership compromise strategic decision-making and team motivation (Bezerra & Paranaguá, 2021; Caldeira et al., 2023).

Insufficient material resources and inadequate infrastructure are recurring obstacles in hospital management. The lack of appropriate equipment, supplies, and technologies compromises the quality of care and increases pressure on nurse managers, who need to seek creative solutions to maintain the continuity of services (Faria & Santos, 2021).

Nurses' academic training does not always include the managerial skills necessary for effective performance in hospital management. The absence of ongoing training programs and institutional support hinders the development of skills in leadership, strategic planning, and decision-making (Amarante & Burg, 2022; Vandresen et al., 2023).

The lack of recognition and appreciation of the role of nurse managers is a persistent challenge. The absence of clear career policies and financial incentives discourages these professionals from remaining in management positions, contributing to turnover and the loss of talent in health institutions (Santos, 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, highlighting weaknesses in the organization of health services and in the ability to adapt to new demands. The need for social distancing and the overload of health systems have negatively impacted the continuity of care, highlighting the importance of strategies to strengthen the health network and train professionals to face crisis situations (Portela et al., 2022).

Therefore, to overcome these challenges, it is essential to invest in the continuous training and qualification of nursing professionals, in improving working conditions and in expanding available resources (Amarante & Burg, 2022; Vandresen et al., 2023).

Pimentel, Sales and Gouveia (2021) pointed out the difficulties faced by nurses in performing managerial functions in hospital institutions, such as work overload, lack of managerial training and lack of professional appreciation. It suggests the need for institutional policies that support and strengthen management training.

Research by Cruz et al. (2020) showed that nurses occupy strategic positions in the hospital structure, but still face resistance when making administrative decisions. Leadership is seen as an essential skill that needs to be developed from graduation.

#### **4.3 Impact of Nurses' Performance on the Quality of Hospital Care**

The role of nurses in hospital management has demonstrated a significant impact on the quality of care provided to patients. Effective leadership and the implementation of appropriate management practices contribute to the improvement of care processes, promoting a safer and more efficient care environment (Gois et al., 2021).

The presence of work environments that are favorable to nursing practice is associated with a reduction in adverse events and a decrease in hospital stay (Ribeiro et al., 2024). In a study carried out in a pediatric hospital with international accreditation, nursing professionals reported that such environments contribute to patient safety and the quality of care provided (de Almeida Silva et al., 2022).

Humanization in nursing care is a determining factor for patient recovery. Studies indicate that a humanized approach strengthens trust between patient and professional, improves adherence to treatment, and contributes to a faster and more efficient recovery (Santos et al., 2022; Martins et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the role of the nurse manager is essential in implementing work methods that ensure patient safety and the quality of care provided. The organization and systematization of care processes, led by nurses, allows for a more patient-centered approach, with evidence-based interventions aligned with individual needs (Silva et al., 2025).

Effective management carried out by nurses also positively influences the work environment, promoting motivation and engagement of teams, which directly reflects on the quality of care. Continuous training and the development of management skills are essential for nurses to be able to fully perform their role, contributing to the excellence of hospital services (Silva et al., 2025).

#### **4.4 Study Limitations**

This integrative review is subject to some limitations. First, the inclusion of articles published only in Portuguese, English, and Spanish may have excluded relevant studies in other languages. Additionally, the use of specific descriptors may have limited the retrieval of studies that addressed nursing leadership in hospital management using alternative terms. The subjectivity inherent to qualitative synthesis may also influence the interpretation of the evidence. Finally, the absence of primary data collection limits the ability to generalize the findings to all contexts of hospital management in Brazil.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

This study allowed us to understand the growing inclusion of nursing in Brazilian hospital management, highlighting the complexity and relevance of this process for the qualification of health services. The findings show that nurses have been assuming strategic roles in hospital environments, contributing with managerial skills focused on leadership, planning and organization of care, in addition to promoting management closer to the reality of care.

The three categories discussed – managerial skills, challenges faced and impact on the quality of care – revealed that, although nurses are increasingly present in management positions, their performance still encounters structural, cultural and educational barriers. Work overload, limited resources and insufficient recognition of nursing managerial skills remain as important obstacles.

However, the positive impact of nurse leadership on patient safety, team satisfaction and the effectiveness of hospital processes is undeniable. To strengthen this representation, it is necessary to expand the spaces for management training in undergraduate nursing programs, invest in ongoing training and, above all, consolidate institutional policies that value the role of the nurse manager.

Thus, the consolidation of the presence of nursing in hospital management represents not only an advance for the professional category, but a strategic opportunity for the transformation of the health management model, with a focus on comprehensiveness, efficiency and humanization of care.

## DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests or non-financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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