

ABSTRACT

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A study of the nurse's pedagogical function and competence in public health promotion and prevention [folkhälsöarbete]

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The view of the nurse's pedagogical function has undergone considerable changes in the past century from being an independent function to becoming subordinate to the physician/medical practitioner. In contrast to this, the nurse is expected to be educated to carry out and to carry out an independent pedagogical activity with the purpose of contributing to improved public health.

The aim of this study was to describe and elucidate the conditions under which public health promotion and prevention and the nurse's pedagogical function are formed at the population level on the basis of the conceptions and intentions of local representatives and the culture of the nursing profession, health care and the nursing education system. With the aim in mind, four questions were formulated and have served as a guideline for the implementation of the study. Theoretical perspectives and central concepts are derived from Bourdieu and Foucault. The study consists of two interview studies, and a total of 32 semi-structured interviews have been run. The data material has been analysed with the help of discourse analysis in which the focus has been on the discursive level of the statements.

The results show that public health work involves giving the population access to health care and guided concrete initiatives and measures in relation to risk groups and risk behaviour, designed on the basis of political, organisational, economic and discursive control factors. The nurse's position and pedagogical activity in public health work is highly institutionalised, not explicitly expressed, sought, discussed or problematised. The pedagogical function is seen as being linked with the professional one and cannot be separated from it. Basic and/or specialist education has not led to the nurse's pedagogical function being made visible either. The qualifications required are based on the conception of the importance of medical professional knowledge, which is also regarded as the basis for being able to mediate knowledge. Consequently, formal pedagogical competence is not seen as a requirement or even a necessity for being able to carry out pedagogical activity. In her pedagogical activity, the nurse acts from an autodidactic pedagogical approach resulting from learning, reading and/or imitating various models.