

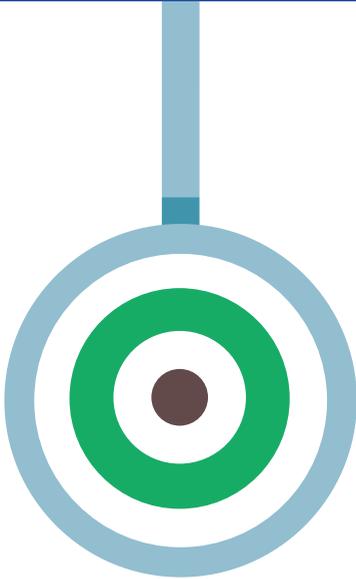


SWEDISH SOCIETY OF NURSING

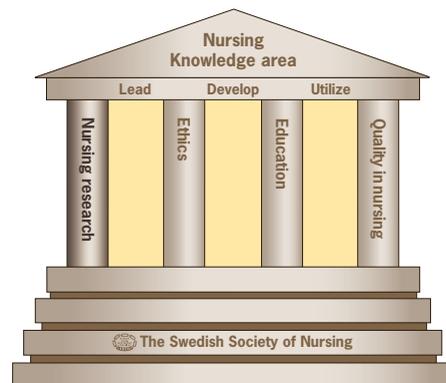
NURSING

– RESEARCH AND THE FUTURE

A STRATEGY FOR NURSING RESEARCH



Swedish Society of Nursing is the professional organisation for nurses. It is a non-profit organisation that represents the nursing areas of expertise. Tasks in the organisation is based on four ground pillars: research, ethics, education and quality improvement. www.swenurse.se



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PREFACE

To guarantee safe, high quality, person-centred healthcare for both today's and tomorrow's patients and their significant others, nursing research is a crucial factor. Research in nursing contributes to developing and improving healthcare that is evidence-based and that fulfils the needs of patients and their significant others. Nursing research results also provide significant contributions to the health of the entire population.

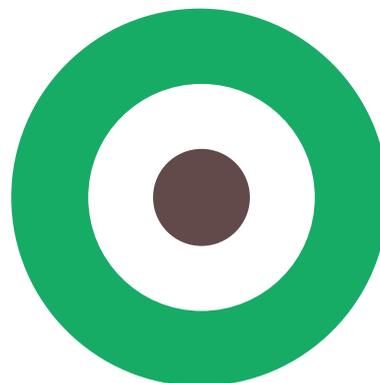
Nursing – Research and the Future is a strategy for research in nursing developed by the Swedish Society of Nursing. The strategy describes the importance of giving patients, significant others and the general public the opportunity to participate to a much greater extent in the research process in order to increase the utilization of research results. It also describes how this can be achieved through the principles of funding, development of structures, research environments and improved organisational preconditions.

The strategy also highlights important research areas for better health and better nursing care. These areas respond to a society where more and more people are living with long-term conditions and where mental health problems have increased. Concerns with the impact of migration on health is also mentioned.

The strategy *Nursing Research and the Future* targets decision-makers in healthcare, research funders, nurses and anyone who wants to promote knowledge-based, high quality, safe care. The strategy was developed in cooperation with the Swedish Society of Nursing's Scientific Council and has been adopted by the Board of the Swedish Society of Nursing.

Ami Hommel

President Swedish Society of Nursing



NURSING – RESEARCH AND THE FUTURE

The future is here

Decision-makers and funding bodies must prioritise nursing research. Stronger resources and developed structures for nursing research are crucial to the implementation of research results that contribute to high quality, safe care without increased cost. This can generate positive effects in terms of both patient health and the situation of significant others as well as on society's resources for health promotion, disease prevention, healthcare and general welfare. Key to increased utilisation of research results is the involvement of patients, significant others and the general public in the whole research process by means of increased awareness among nursing researchers as well as attractive incentives from research funding bodies. Research with and for the patient must be strengthened!

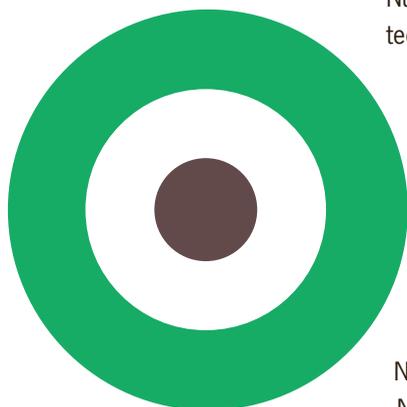
The Swedish Society of Nursing is committed to working towards ensuring the activities described in this research strategy comprising development of structures, research environments, and organisational preconditions and funding for nursing research are achieved. These efforts take the form of dialogue with decision-makers, participation in debates, work to eliminate knowledge gaps and dissemination of relevant research results.

Nursing research makes a difference

Nursing research constitutes an important part of research conducted in Sweden and is a crucial factor in the quest to develop and manage long term, sustainable healthcare and general welfare that fulfil patients' and their significant others' need for high quality and safety. In order to meet the challenges faced by Swedish society today in the form of an ageing population, lack of equality, increasing migration, a higher level of mental health problems and as a result rising healthcare costs, the following are necessary: new knowledge, greater use of existing knowledge, alternative solutions to problems and effective improvements in current care.

Novel ways of describing and analysing problems are also necessary.

Nursing research is of high relevance to society and is characterised by openness to novel ideas and lines of inquiry. The more than half century since the start of this research has witnessed highly successful development, especially during the past two decades. In Sweden the overall knowledge deve-



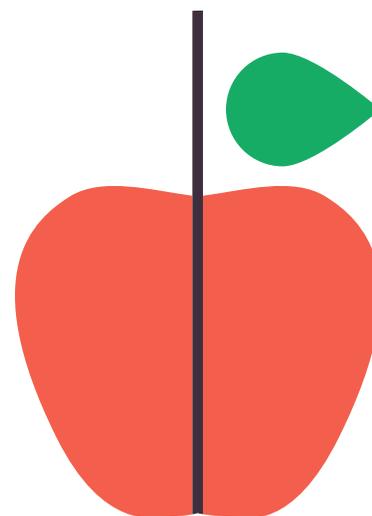
lopment in nursing rests on a broad base with more than 1,500 nurses having acquired a doctoral degree and approximately 120 professors in the nursing field. This constitutes a resource of great potential, contributing to valuable research results as well as expanding the nursing knowledge base. Nurses are highly involved in implementation research, employing a number of research strategies to develop knowledge about how to implement evidence based research results to a greater extent in everyday care.

Nursing involves complex phenomena and therefore a combination of research approaches is called for. Basic studies are needed in areas where the conditions for care and health are undergoing significant change. An example is when the use of new technology leads to the creation of changed environments and conditions for relationships, communication and self-care. The development of nursing and healthcare leads to a demand for theoretical and philosophical studies of nursing that explore, develop and test concepts, models and theories for use in research and person-centred care. As a result, nursing research has also contributed to the development of mixed methods, which combine quantitative and qualitative research designs.

Swedish nursing research has a strong position internationally in many different areas, with a growing number of publications and citations. Its impact is enhanced by the increasing level of well designed studies conducted. For example, controlled intervention studies have demonstrated the positive effects of person-centred care in terms of patient health as well as more effective use of public healthcare resources. Other examples include nursing research that contributes to reducing the harm caused by care injuries, leading to less patient suffering. In Sweden, the cost of such harm amounts to 6.5 billion SEK annually, thus research aimed at prevention can provide huge gains to society.

Current status and future direction of nursing research

The aim of nursing research is to improve and make care safer and more equal for both individuals in need of care and their significant others. Nursing researchers seek knowledge about individual support needs and how to maintain health throughout life, from birth to old age and end of life. The research results highlight individuals' and their significant others' experiences when faced with disease and ill health, in addition to providing deeper and important



knowledge about how to develop professional approach and nursing interventions. Furthermore, nursing research employs, develops and evaluates new methods and nursing interventions. Nursing research also involves education, leadership and organisational factors of importance for the development of nursing. This new knowledge improves nursing care for the benefit of patients, their significant others, the nursing profession, and the society.

Knowledge-based healthcare practice requires knowledge about ethical values. The foundation of nursing values asserts that both nursing and nursing research are based on a humanistic view, where the human being is regarded as active and creative as well as part of a context. In the care situation respect for a person's dignity, integrity, autonomy and vulnerability is vital in order to enable her/him to experience trust, hope and meaning as well as alleviation of suffering despite disease and ill health.

Like all research, nursing research should be innovative and of a high quality. The environment in which it is conducted should preferably be characterised by strong cooperation among different nursing and healthcare disciplines as well as other relevant areas. It is essential that the research questions are based on problems related to the clinical activities close to the patient.



Nursing research contributes to knowledge based nursing care, healthcare and education

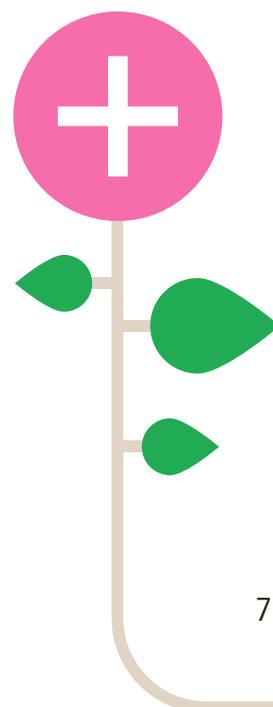
The Swedish Society of Nursing is committed to working towards:

- ensuring that nursing research results are utilised for the benefit of patients and their significant others, integrated into the knowledge content of nursing education on basic and advanced levels and made available to the general public through increased dissemination, implementation and use in everyday healthcare.

Knowledge based healthcare presupposes that the knowledge generated by research is reliable and that it is utilised in clinical practice. It is important that nursing research focuses to a greater degree on the evaluation of interventions in order to expand nursing evidence as well as accelerate the development of nursing and healthcare.

Major resources are devoted to the production of new knowledge aimed at improving medical- and nursing care. At the same time, it is well known that clinical activities do not sufficiently benefit from results reporting effective nursing interventions and that it takes a long time before such interventions are implemented in everyday nursing.

There is a need to create structures for strategic cooperation between research, education and clinical activities. Implementation research should continue to receive priority in the calls for research proposals from national research funding bodies. Furthermore, strong interdisciplinary research clusters that include nursing competence should be established at a larger number of academic settings. Cooperation with municipalities, county councils and regions should also be extended to enable funding of single subject studies as well as larger research programmes. There is a significant need for innovative methods to support implementation and such methods need to be evaluated in terms of both process and impact.



PRECONDITIONS FOR NURSING RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Funding of nursing research

The Swedish Society of Nursing is working towards generating considerably more financial resources for nursing research by means of:

- efforts to increase the size of the fixed research funding allocated to universities and university colleges and make that funding proportionate to their educational assignment
- increased allocation of funding for nursing research projects through the national research councils
- the funding of nursing research sponsored by foundations, commissioned research and other external national and international forms of financing.

Over the past 15 years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of nursing researchers, as well as in research quality. However, the allocation of funding has not increased in line with the national cost development. The educational assignment within nursing is substantial, which means that nursing researchers generally have limited time for research.

It is of vital importance to increase the fixed research allocation to academic settings in order to optimise the use of research resources for knowledge development that improves, advances and renders nursing care more effective. Comparative studies of competitive funding and the fixed research allocation have established that an increase of the latter leads to more effective research. The fixed research allocation should be increased, linked to the level of nursing education and be clearly earmarked for nursing research purposes. The research allocation is of decisive importance for strong links between research and education, which in turn influences nurses' opportunity to implement research results in clinical practice.

An increase in the allocation of funding for nursing research is also necessary for conducting high quality intervention studies that evaluate various nursing methods. Nursing interventions are complex and require an advanced design, leading to high costs.

Structures and contexts for nursing research

The Swedish Society of Nursing is committed to ensuring that:

- nursing as an independent discipline is provided with the conditions necessary for developing creative research environments
- the calls for research proposals by the national research councils are wide in scope and based on themes relevant to the field of nursing
- nursing science competence within the national research councils is both strengthened and broadened
- structures and incentives are put in place that involve patients, significant others and the general public in the entire research process.

Nursing researchers must be provided with the conditions necessary for cooperation with other disciplines in thematically strong environments. Calls for thematic research proposals that promote interdisciplinary projects led by nursing researchers are of crucial importance for development of health, health care and nursing care. Nursing researchers should have ample opportunity for collaboration in strategic projects and be involved in national and international cooperation. A crucial factor in this respect is that the field of nursing research is adequately represented by competent researchers on the boards and drafting committees of the research councils.

Patients and their significant others need to be involved in nursing research to a greater extent and have greater influence over which research questions are relevant. Such involvement can lead to greater dissemination and utilisation of research results.



Organisational preconditions for nursing research

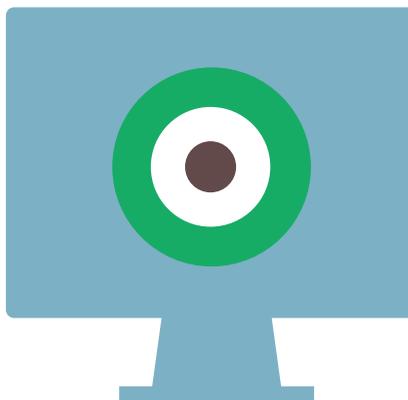
The Swedish Society of Nursing considers that:

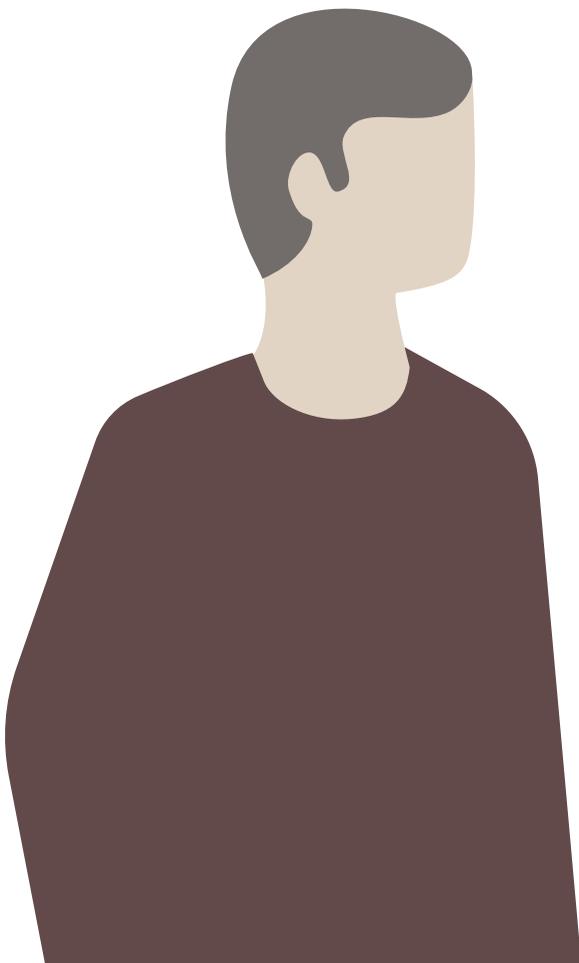
- more positions should be created for nurses with a doctoral degree that combine patient care delivery with research and teaching
- a greater number of posts such as postdoctoral positions and assistant professorships should be created for nurses who have acquired a doctoral degree and who conduct research.

A precondition for increasing the extent to which research results lead to improved nursing care for patients and their significant others is organisational interventions that strengthen and facilitate connections between nursing research and everyday care.

Nurses who have acquired a doctoral degree should be provided with the conditions necessary to allow them to combine patient care delivery with nursing leadership and research. In order to safeguard high quality healthcare, employers and academic settings should create more combined nursing positions including clinical professorships and lecturer posts.

Research funding is necessary in order to safeguard the recruitment of competent nursing researchers, thus ensuring the growth and development of the nursing discipline. There is also a need for a greater number of post doctoral positions, clinical research fellowship or other opportunities for nurses who have acquired a doctoral degree in order to utilise their expertise, thus enabling them to lead the development of nursing care and healthcare for the benefit of patients and their families.





RESEARCH AREAS OF IMPORTANCE FOR IMPROVED HEALTH AND NURSING CARE

The Swedish Society of Nursing stresses the importance of involving all core competencies in research and quality improvement in nursing. The six core competencies of all healthcare professionals are person-centred care, team work and collaboration, evidence-based care, quality improvement, safety and informatics. Below, the prioritised research areas for improved health and nursing care are described from various perspectives of the six core competencies.

More studies need to be conducted in the areas of improved health and improved nursing care. In addition, it is essential that nursing research results are synthesised to a higher degree. Systematic knowledge reviews with meta analyses and meta syntheses constitute an important support for the development of knowledge-based healthcare.

The described research areas should not be regarded as a final prioritisation, as rapid societal changes can give rise to new or changed needs, requiring flexibility in terms of reprioritisation.

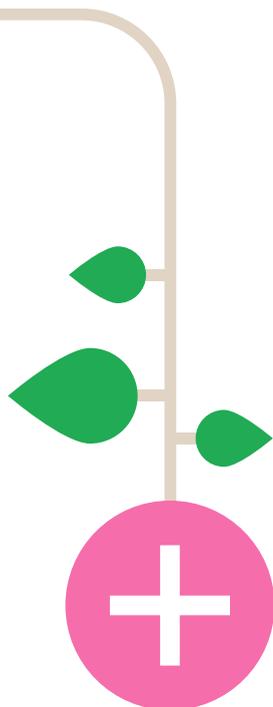
Research areas of importance for improved health

Living with a long-term disease or multimorbidity

Advances in the area of medical research have meant that people live longer, which can lead to a life with long-term conditions or complications that often necessitate a high level of healthcare and nursing care. To meet these needs, nursing research should explore how nursing, care and the care environment can be developed and improved for these groups.

Persons with long-term conditions and multimorbidity require complex and sophisticated nursing care. This means that there is a need for research on information, education, self-efficacy, patient-provider partnership, nursing care with reference to basic needs and the organisation of nursing care delivery for this patient group. Thus, more resources should be made available to research within community healthcare, which is where frail people with long term illness or multimorbidity are most often cared for.

Nursing research that focuses on optimal alleviation of severe symptoms and how to support a dignified death irrespective of the form of healthcare or end of life environment is urgently needed. When a person suffers from ill health or is at the end of life, her/his significant others' life situation is also affected. More research is required on the needs of significant others due to the fact that they assume increased responsibility for nursing and healthcare.



Mental health and health effects of migration

There is a great need for research on how mental health can be maintained and strengthened. Areas in which research can make an important contribution are mental ill health support for marginalised groups as well as the effects of the increase in migration on health and nursing. The Swedish Society of Nursing considers that three areas must be prioritised. First of all, child and adolescent mental health should receive high priority within nursing research, as the increasing mental illness among young people is very worrying. Secondly, there is also an urgent need for research focusing on adolescents and adults with long-term mental illness and addiction problems.

Thirdly, nursing research is required on the health effects of increased migration. Today, there are children and adults in Sweden who have experienced the horrors of war. Many suffer from post traumatic stress symptoms and new sickness patterns emerge. Migration makes it essential to conduct research that provides increased knowledge of cultural competence, ethical stance and methods for clinical support.

III health and equality of care

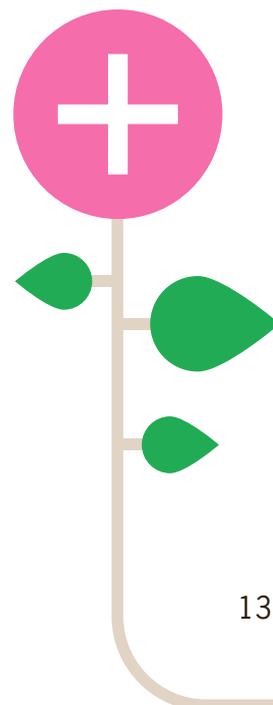
The health of the population and access to nursing and healthcare are unevenly distributed, and clearly linked to socio-economic conditions, migration and marginalised groups. A highly prioritised research area is how nursing can counteract alienation and inequality of healthcare. There is a great need for research that investigates how nursing interventions and nurses' competence can prevent ill health and promote healthy living habits.

Research areas of importance for enhanced nursing care

Safety

A key role for nursing research concerns quality as well as safety, for example preventing pressure ulcers, malnutrition, infections and fall injuries. Other vital research areas include a preventive safety culture, ensuring staff competence, and a safe care and work environment.

Studies based on quality register data and the development of nursing quality indicators can contribute to improved quality and safety of care for patients and their significant others.



Leadership and the organisation of nursing care

Leadership plays a crucial role in the competence of healthcare staff and the quality of nursing care. There is no doubt that it is the single most important factor when it comes to whether and how new knowledge is implemented in healthcare settings. The structure and organisation of nursing care are important research areas.

A model of nursing leadership in the USA is called Magnet certified¹ hospitals. How such a model can be designed in the Swedish care context represents a new research area. Other areas that should be investigated are the composition of the team, which also involves the patient, and the role of nursing in the teamwork.

Person-centred care necessitates an organisation that invites the patient to be a partner and co-creator in his/her own care. Person-centred care is not a new model but an ethical stance and a view of human beings that guides the actions of healthcare professionals. Intervention and implementation studies are vital in order to obtain evidence-based knowledge of how person-centeredness can be achieved and made sustainable over time as well as ways in which the organisation of nursing care can support different aspects of person-centred care.

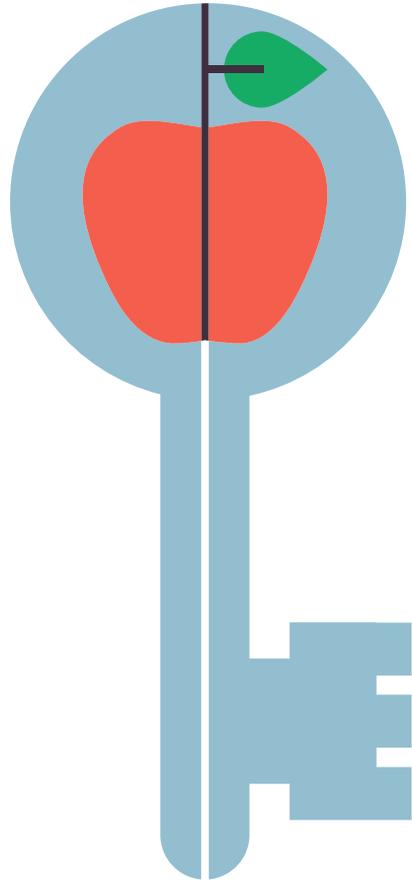
Information and communication technology (ICT)

The ongoing digital development in society in general as well as in healthcare and general welfare is rapid. This creates a need for nursing research about how digital technology is perceived by users of e-health and welfare technology, how it should be structured in order to support patients, their significant others as well as healthcare professionals and how to improve information management in nursing, healthcare and general welfare. The design, implementation and impact of digital services and products must be researched both from an ethical and a nursing perspective. It is also important to investigate how ICT can contribute to learning, competence development and communication among patients, significant others and healthcare professionals.

Increasing the necessity of nursing research impact

Swedish healthcare and general welfare are facing large challenges and it is therefore of crucial importance that the nursing profession act cohesively to enhance the preconditions for and impact of nursing research. In these efforts, the Swedish Society of Nursing's strategy for nursing research constitutes a resource.

1. Palm Ernsäter, T. (2015). *Leadership in nursing care and the Magnet model*. (In Swedish). Stockholm: Swedish Society of Nursing.





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The Swedish Society of Nursing is a nonprofit organisation and a forum for discussing and developing nursing care by promoting nursing research, ethics, education and quality in nursing. The Society thereby contributes towards a high standard of nursing and health care for the benefit of patients and the people close to them.