



HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ENTEROSTOMAL THERAPY IN PORTUGAL

CONTEXTO HISTÓRICO DA ESTOMATERAPIA EM PORTUGAL

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Isabel Maria Ribeiro Morais Araújo dos Santos^{1,*} , Cláudia Rocha Silva² 

The history of Stomatherapy in Portugal is entirely linked to the first Stomatherapy nursing consultations, which appeared in 1991 and were regulated by the Ministry of Health's Order (*Decreto do Ministério da Saúde*) of February 24, 1995, which defined the creation of Stomatherapy Nursing care, consultations and, as a priority, the training in the area.

The path was made consistently; nurses began to attend postgraduate courses and attend English, French and Spanish universities, whose Stomatherapy Courses were accredited by the World Council of Enterostomal Therapists (WCET).

To aggregate the interests of nurses in this area, the Portuguese Association of Stomatherapy Care Nurses (*Associação Portuguesa de Enfermeiros de Cuidados em Estomaterapia-Apece*) was formed in January 2005.

A new cycle of stomatherapy began in the country in 2012, with universities carrying out the Advanced Training Course in Stomatherapy. Some hospital institutions were developing short-term training throughout the country.

Simultaneously with the training of nurses and the organization of stomatherapy consultations, the need for access to ostomy devices in an equitable way arose. Health entities sought to find solutions. This situation was resolved by the guardianship, which came into force on March 3, 2017, of an ordinance, which establishes the system of reimbursement of medical devices, and they're free of charge, guaranteeing equity in access to materials intended for all people with an ostomy, and with all types of ostomy. At the same time, guidelines emerged that establish the Clinical and Intervention Indications for the person with an ostomy in the different contexts of health care provision, under the responsibility of the General Directorate of Health, with the participation of Apece. The last few years have been translated into an intense work of affirmation of stomatherapy nursing that culminated with the recognition of the Nurse with Differentiated and Advanced Practice in Stomatherapy recognized by the

1. Associação Portuguesa de Enfermeiros de Cuidados em Estomaterapia – Portugal.

2. Instituto Português de Oncologia de Coimbra – Coimbra – Portugal.

*Autora correspondente: isabelmrmass@gmail.com

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Order of Nurses that approved the project of Regulation of the Competence in Stomatherapy and defined the profile of the Stomatherapy Nurse.

The commitment to the professional development of nurses caring for people with ostomy through the recognition of training and professional experience as advocated in the competence certification process makes us believe in a more robust Stomatherapy Nursing in Portugal, capable of incorporating the evidence in reflection and decision-making with an affirmation of this professional group among peers and in multidisciplinary teams.

As Portugal is a small country, it is, however, still characterized by significant asymmetries between the coast and the interior, the north and the south, and islands, concerning the provision of assistance, postgraduate training and the existence of nurses with certification of increased skills in stomatherapy in different care contexts.

The aging population in Portugal and the high incidence of oncological diseases in the age group over 50 years have increased the complexity and vulnerability of the population and challenges nurses, health professionals, academic and health institutions, medical device companies and citizens in general to develop partnerships, projects and initiatives that promote equity in access to quality care in stomatherapy with efficient management of resources and associated costs.

The creation of value in stomatherapy increasingly involves the active participation of stomatherapy nurses in multidisciplinary care processes, adapted to each context and the needs and expectations of each person with an ostomy.

The synergies resulting from partnerships with national and international professional associations, such as the *Associação Brasileira de Estomaterapia (SOBEST)*, allow stomatherapy nurses to produce, publish and give visibility to nursing knowledge and significantly contribute to the standardization, replicability and transversality of good practices.

The *Apece*, in its mission to promote the development of stomatherapy, recognizes that the challenge for the future also involves health institutions investing in the differentiation of their resources and considering in their management to audit, in the different services, the criteria of advanced and diverse competences, the existence of certified resources in stomatherapy and the impact of these resources on the quality of care and training in stomatherapy.

The commitment to continuous improvement processes, partnerships, benchmarking, and evaluation of results sensitive to the practice of stomatherapy nursing is the necessary incentive for nurses to increasingly invest in their professional development in the area of stomatherapy and that, in the future, this investment and this differentiation translate into transversal care to the entire population, in quality stomatherapy.