









ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN STOMAL THERAPY NURSING: POTENTIAL ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE IN THE LABOR MARKET

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ABSTRACT






Objective: To analyze the potentiating aspects of entrepreneurial activities described by stomal therapist nurses. **Method:** Qualitative, descriptive-exploratory study, carried out through semi-structured interviews, between January and April 2020, with 26 enterprising stoma therapists, supported by the non-probabilistic technique known as snowball. The collected data were fully transcribed and subsequently treated, applying the thematic content analysis technique. **Results:** Topics that pervaded the perception of entrepreneurship potential in stomatherapy were related, such as market demand and the vast entrepreneurial field of the specialty; clinical experience; the importance of indication by other patients and professionals; the influence of social media and the feeling of satisfaction with the development of the work activity. **Conclusion:** The analysis of the data allowed us to conclude that the cited potentiators may be a reflection of the reduced supply of specialized public services to the population, expanding the search for such specialists in a particular way, both by referring other patients and professionals and by searching through the social media, which expands the fields of action of the stoma therapist and can bring more satisfaction with their work as specialists.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing. Enterostomal therapy. Entrepreneurship.

EMPREENDEDORISMO NA ENFERMAGEM EM ESTOMATERAPIA: ASPECTOS POTENCIALIZADORES DE ATUAÇÃO NO MERCADO DE TRABALHO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar os aspectos potencializadores descritos por enfermeiros estomaterapeutas para realização de atividades empreendedoras. **Método:** Estudo de natureza qualitativa, do tipo descritivo-exploratório, realizado por meio de entrevista semiestruturada, entre os meses de janeiro e abril de 2020, com 26 estomaterapeutas empreendedores, apoiado na técnica não probabilística conhecida como snowball, ou bola de neve. Os dados coletados foram transcritos de forma integral e, posteriormente, tratados, aplicando-se a técnica de análise temática de conteúdo. **Resultados:** Foram relacionados temas que perpassaram pela percepção de potencializadores do empreendedorismo na estomaterapia, como a demanda do mercado e o vasto campo empreendedor da

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especialidade; a experiência clínica; a importância da indicação por outros pacientes e profissionais; a influência das mídias sociais e o sentimento de satisfação com o desenvolvimento da atividade laboral. **Conclusão:** A análise dos dados permitiu concluir que os potencializadores citados podem ser reflexo da reduzida oferta de serviços públicos especializados à população, ampliando-se a busca por tais especialistas de forma particular, tanto pela indicação de outros pacientes e profissionais quanto pela busca nas mídias sociais, o que expande os campos de atuação do estomaterapeuta e pode trazer maior satisfação com seu trabalho enquanto especialistas.

DESCRITORES: Enfermagem. Estomaterapia. Empreendedorismo.

EMPRENDIMIENTO EN ENFERMERÍA ESTOMATERÁPICA: ASPECTOS POTENCIALES DE DESEMPEÑO EN EL MERCADO LABORAL

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Analizar los aspectos potenciadores de las actividades emprendedoras descritos por enfermeros estomaterapeutas. **Método:** Estudio cualitativo, descriptivo-exploratorio, realizado a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, entre enero y abril de 2020, con 26 estomaterapeutas emprendedores, apoyados en la técnica no probabilística conocida como "Bola de Nieve". Los datos recogidos fueron transcritos íntegramente y posteriormente tratados, aplicando la técnica de análisis de contenido temático. **Resultados:** Se relacionaron temas que impregnaron la percepción de los potenciadores del emprendimiento en estomaterapia, como la demanda del mercado y el vasto campo empresarial de la especialidad, la experiencia clínica, la importancia de la indicación por parte de otros pacientes y profesionales, la influencia de las redes sociales y el sentimiento de satisfacción con lo que haces. **Conclusión:** El análisis de los datos permite concluir que los citados potenciadores pueden ser reflejo de la reducida oferta de servicios públicos especializados a la población, ampliando de manera particular la búsqueda de estos profesionales, tanto por la derivación de otros pacientes y profesionales como por la búsqueda a través de las redes sociales, que amplían los campos de actuación del profesional y pueden traer más satisfacción con su trabajo como especialistas.

DESCRIPTORES: Enfermería. Estomaterapia. Emprendimiento.

INTRODUCTION

Stomatherapy is an exclusive specialty for nurses. In it, they act in the care of people with stomas, wounds, anal and urinary incontinence, fistulas, tubes and drains, carrying out activities and strategies to improve the quality of life of the assisted clientele¹.

The stomatherapy is a promising area for the nursing professional who wants to be an entrepreneur since they can carry out various activities in a specialized way. This area provides the possibility of acting in multiple fields, whether public or private, such as assistance activities related to preventive, therapeutic and rehabilitation aspects, teaching and research activities, administrative activities, trade, auditing, technical assistance and specialized consulting, among others².

The International Council of Nurses has challenged these professionals to be transformational, progressive, evidence-oriented and solution-focused³.

Nurses have been entrepreneurial in a variety of ways since the beginning of the nursing profession⁴; however, in international research, entrepreneurship in nursing is still a relatively unknown phenomenon due to several barriers related to health systems and the culture of the profession, which hinder the potential for more entrepreneurial nurses to exist⁵.

The term *entrepreneurship* emerged around the 15th century through the French words *entrepreneur* or *entreprendre* (to undertake), defined as the realization or introduction of something new by identifying opportunities or needs that need to be met^{6,7}. The literature also identifies it according to its types: business entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and social entrepreneurship⁶.

Entrepreneurial, commercial or business entrepreneurship corresponds to the visualization of an opportunity by an individual with the possibility of success, resulting in profit for the entrepreneur, and the generation of wealth is a way of measuring the generation of value⁷. In intrapreneurship, entrepreneurs do not have their own businesses but develop ventures in existing public or private organizations⁷. On the other hand, social entrepreneurship does not focus on financial gain as the ultimate business objective but uses market-based strategies to generate social benefit. Financial resources are reinvested to further the social mission⁸.

Several factors are considered to enhance entrepreneurial activity: behavioral (characteristics of the entrepreneur himself) and contextual (social, economic and environmental factors). These factors may encourage the action of undertaking⁹, and, therefore, it is necessary to know some of these conditions capable of facilitating and enhancing entrepreneurship.

One can list the culture conducive to the creation of companies in a society, the legal and regulatory factors that involve the creation and maintenance of new businesses, related to political issues of support for entrepreneurship, access to forms of financing and industrial/technological parks, reducing bureaucracy, developing infrastructure, among others¹⁰.

Previous experience and prior knowledge about the market are also mentioned due to the individual's more remarkable ability to maintain the initial motivation and to face challenges and difficulties, as well as the family relationship with entrepreneurship, with the family being recognized as a fundamental in the decision to undertake¹¹.

In the case of stomal therapy specifically, the fact that the specialist has the technical knowledge and personal care skills as a differential for some businesses can be cited as a potential enabler of this process of undertaking, expanding their roles and opening new paths¹².

Thus, considering these and several other existing potentiating aspects, such contextualization must be done to understand the specificities of this specialist's entrepreneurial behavior⁹. Therefore, this study is relevant, as it will expand reflections and discussions on the subject and contribute to fostering an entrepreneurial culture in nursing and stoma therapy.

It is also important to mention that studies on entrepreneurship in nursing still need to be explored in scientific research⁵, evidencing a gap in the approach of this theme, mainly concerning stomatherapy, which justifies the need to carry out studies like this one.

Given the above, the following question arises: what aspects enhance entrepreneurship carried out by stomal therapist nurses? This study analyzed the potentializing aspects of entrepreneurial activities described by stomal therapist nurses.

METHODS

The following is qualitative research of the descriptive-exploratory type, guided by the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ)¹³ recommendations. The scenario selected as the starting point of this study was a public university in the Southeast Region of Brazil, where there is a postgraduate course in Nursing in Stomatherapy.

The sample of study participants was supported by the non-probabilistic technique known as snowballing or chain of informants. In this technique, the first participants of the study indicate new participants. These, in turn, point out others, and so on, until the proposed objective is reached or the saturation point is reached, that is, when the interviews and observations no longer lead to a significant increase in new information¹⁴.

The selection of participants took place according to the following inclusion criteria: stoma therapists of both genders, regardless of age and who exercise or have already exercised some entrepreneurial activity in stomatherapy, in the areas of assistance, consulting and/or advisory, teaching, management, development of social and/or private projects, development of products and/or technologies and other types of entrepreneurial activity.

As exclusion criteria for participants, the following were listed: stoma therapists who developed entrepreneurial activities outside the scope of nursing activities and/or worked in an entrepreneurial activity but did not contribute to its idealization and materialization.

In this sense, four enterprising stoma therapists were initially interviewed, three of whom had graduated from the course mentioned above and one professor. These first participants were asked to indicate at least one enterprising stoma therapist. Data from these four interviews were also included in the analysis.

Based on these indications, other participants were reached, indicating at least one enterprising stoma therapist, and so on. In this way, the other interviewees were captured, reaching a total of 26 enterprising stoma therapists, from four of the five regions of Brazil, except for the North Region, for which specialists were not indicated.

The primary author carried out data collection, which took place through a semi-structured interview between January and April 2020. The interview script consisted of two parts. The first presented identification data, which aimed to capture a brief profile of the participants and their enterprise, and the second part included five questions referring to the object of the study.

The interviews were conducted with four in-person participants at a previously agreed place and time. The other interviews (22) were carried out by videoconference, using applications available for this purpose, due to the geographical distance of some participants and also due to the occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic, decreed by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020.

The interviews lasted an average of 22 minutes and were recorded using digital voice recording equipment, which allowed access to the recording of the participants' speeches. The collected data were transcribed fully and subsequently treated, applying the thematic content analysis technique¹⁵. In this way, 282 registration units were captured, which gave rise to the following category: boosters of entrepreneurship in stomatherapy.

The Research Ethics Committee approved the present study under Opinion number 3,783,965 and Presentation Certificate for Ethical Appraisal number 26540519.2.0000.5282 on December 19, 2019, to meet ethical requirements. Before each interview, research participants received an informed consent form. A codification was created to protect the secrecy of the identity of the interviewees, with the letter E, in allusion to the word *entrevista* (interview, in Portuguese), followed by the sequence of cardinal numbers for each interview, starting with the number 1, referring to the ordering of the discussions.

RESULTS

Twenty-six stomal therapists were interviewed, 22 (84.62%) female and four (15.38%) male. As for age, two (7.69%) participants were between 26 and 30 years old, 10 (38.47%) between 31 and 35 years old, four (15.38%) between 36 and 40 years old, three (11.54%) between 41 and 45 years old, one (3.85%) between 46 and 50 years old, two (7.69%) between 51 and 55 years old, and four (15.38%) were in the range of 56 to 60 years.

As for training as a stoma therapist, 11 (42.31%) declared from one to five years of training; nine (34.61%), from six to ten years old; two (7.69%) aged 11 to 15 years; one (3.85%) aged 16 to 20 years; and three (11.54%) had been 26 to 30 years as stomal therapists.

Regarding the entrepreneurial activity of the interviewees, a variety of undertakings were perceived, from more consolidated initiatives in common sense, such as opening their own business and home care, in which the majority (14) work or have worked at some point in their careers, to investment in nail polish for podiatry services, development of products/patents or even the creation of a social institute.

The interviewees pointed out that they work in a specialty with great potential for entrepreneurship due to the labor market demand. What can be verified through the following statements:

We work with people with needs in particular areas, which people need to learn about in college, doctors and nurses. Thus, we work in a field where we have control of the situation, and few people dominate. This fact makes us enablers, entering an area of coverage with few services (E15).

“What facilitates is the demand itself, the market’s own need. The market needs specialized care and stomatherapy; if you want it, you become a real specialist” (E21).

The facility would be the number of ostomized patients that we have. We have social demand. The number of people with problems related to stomatherapy is increasing, which we know comes from oncological diseases, chronic inflammatory bowel diseases (E26).

In addition to market demand, the specialty offers a vast field for entrepreneurship, which has also been one of the potential drivers most cited by participants. Thus, several options for the stoma therapist’s areas of action were listed, as can be identified in the selected statements below:

“I believe that we can undertake actions based on permanent education, continuing education and acting on social networks, in terms of consulting, sometimes even for institutions, in the organization of stomatherapy services” (E12).

How can I be an entrepreneur? I am starting [to] organize a stomatherapy service at my institution. So, I wrote a project for [the] institution, showing [the] institution what it is possible to do. I conducted an economic feasibility study for such a service, indicating that a patient assisted with certain products [...] is cured faster (E15).

“It is possible to have a consulting company; it is possible to have a training company; the possibilities are endless. I think that both care and education and research, entrepreneurship has much to do” (E18);

“I see the audit part, continuing education, anyway. As part of products, product development, business development, we are closer to product engineering, pharmaceutical engineering” (E23).

Another potentiator for the stoma therapist’s entrepreneurship mentioned by the participants was the importance of having clinical experience before starting an entrepreneurial project. For the interviewees, such an experience works as a great enabler, and the lack of it, consequently, can hinder the entrepreneurial process:

“I think it is important, before having an entrepreneurial attitude, that is, opening your space for action, that have clinical experience, because I think this will be important” (E10);

But today, I see that young people value practice less and go to the market thinking about entrepreneurship, about having their own business, but I see that there is no practical part. [...] I see the professional leaving stomatherapy, and the month after he received the diploma, he is already assisting, handing over the card. I don’t know to what extent this entrepreneurship is positive because perhaps there is a lack of clinical experience (E13).

Professionals with less experience must understand that it’s not time yet and must prepare more. So, you took a year-and-a-half course, and you must be hearing a lot of colleagues saying that they are going to open a practice, that they are going to set up a product store, that this is going, that is going to that, but you can count on your fingers how many succeeded (E15).

Recommendations from professional colleagues, patients and family members, as well as good references from other health professionals, usually doctors, emphasizing and endorsing the professional capacity of the stoma therapist, also emerged as another potentiator: “

A patient who is happy with his service is the one who will recommend it to others. [...] A doctor who likes the work you do will say to another medical colleague: “That nurse is excellent, hire their services” (E3); “;

“We are advising a nursing home; it is being very cool. It was the first nursing home recommended by a doctor I know. She works there and referred us.” (E6);

This greater approximation of the medical category is a point that facilitates a lot, which we could undertake from this side. [...] It’s no use just opening a clinic if you don’t have someone to send the patients to you [...] and a relationship with the professionals we depend on, nutrition, doctors, surgeons, and we don’t walk alone (E17).

With the rise of the digital age, social media were also described by participants as an excellent enabler for entrepreneurship, whether just for disseminating information and disseminating the specialty or as a means of advertising and offering the services that these professionals can provide. This influence of social media was verified in the following statements:

“Social networks are an important means of communication, dissemination and, for some people, it can even become a source of income” (E12);

“I think we can explore social networks more in general. Instagram, Facebook, maybe podcast, to bring information and publicize the services of stomal therapists” (E17);

Even being an influencer on social media is a possibility of entrepreneurship too. With the rise of the media, it is possible to have a channel that allows you to have a financial return with this, as so many YouTubers make a living from this. It is also possible to be an influencer in the area (E18).

Another enhancer highlighted by the participants was the satisfaction with what one does, which is essential, according to the interviewees, to start, follow and maintain their entrepreneurial projects. This issue could be confirmed based on the following statements:

“I think that if you like what you do, there’s no way around it, things will happen” (E2);

“Today, after ten years of open practice, I am managing, which I think is really cool, to provide social care. We reached a level where I can already do social care, which makes me very happy, highlighting the purpose” (E7);

“Another facility is doing what you like; it’s a huge facility for me. I think it’s us doing it with love, and it ends up being fun when you do it with love. When you dedicate yourself 100% to what you like, things flow much more easily” (E23).

DISCUSSION

The themes that facilitate entrepreneurship cited by the participants pervade market demand and the vast entrepreneurial field of the specialty, encompassing the need for prior clinical experience, the importance of indication by other patients and professionals, the influence of social media, and the satisfaction with the work performed. Patient demand has been considered one of the reasons that can lead nurses to start their business¹⁶.

For stoma therapists in Brazil, this high demand comes, among other reasons, from population aging, as the elderly may have health needs related to the three pillars of stoma therapy (wounds, stomata and incontinence)¹, in addition to pathologies and extrinsic causes, such as cancer, car accidents and blade and firearm accidents, which can lead even young people to need specialized care.

This growing demand for nursing actions for the stoma therapist may also reflect the reduced supply of specialized public services, contributing to the need for private care and generating new work spaces¹².

In addition, the stoma therapist nurse has a vast entrepreneurial field, being able to initiate undertakings both in public and private services in the areas of assistance, education, management, research, technical consulting, specialized audits, development and improvement of products, services and patents. For example, the areas of specialized auditing and technical consultancy for companies that develop specialized materials in stomatherapy have shown great growth¹.

In nursing in general, there are reports of expansion of entrepreneurship in non-traditional areas, with professional activities in fields such as aesthetics, podiatry and alternative and complementary treatments¹². This study presents examples of this activity in non-traditional fields, as in the case of one participant, who reported partnering with a nail salon to

prevent and treat foot injuries, specifically in podiatry. It is an unconventional place for a stoma therapist to work, but it demonstrates how broad the entrepreneurial field of the specialty is.

It also mentioned the participants' perception regarding the previous practical experience as a potentiator of entrepreneurship, and the interviewees see with some apprehension that many newly qualified enter into the entrepreneurial area of business without the practice that the experience brings. Experience does not have the power to determine the success or failure of a business. Still, this previous experience makes it possible to help face the challenges along the way and maintain the entrepreneur's motivation due to the greater knowledge of market demands¹¹.

In this sense, leadership experience can be a booster for those starting an entrepreneurial project. At the same time, inexperienced nurses need development and management training because of these deficiencies in business management.¹²

Another point mentioned is the importance of indicating services by the patient or another professional. Thus, it is clear that there is a need to form a network of contacts and relationships, which will help achieve the entrepreneur's objectives¹⁷.

In this regard, despite the indication by the medical professional being cited as an enabler by some participants, this category is also perceived as the one that most promote conflicts and tensions with nursing professionals who hold this specialty and work in the area¹⁸. When these professional relationships are inadequate, distrust is created by the patient and family, who do not consider the nurse an essential part of the health team¹⁸.

Even so, it is vital to create a network of relationships healthily and adequately, allowing the enterprise's expansion and visibility. Those who organize their network effectively enjoy support in their field and reach more customers and partners¹⁷.

In addition, the participants also cited the importance of social media concerning entrepreneurship for the stoma therapist. Entrepreneurs have realized that digital inclusion is necessary to facilitate and open new business opportunities¹⁹.

Social media allow for changes in the communication process, as they have a vast and varied audience. Through them, it is possible to publicize your enterprise, giving it greater visibility, reaching customers and suppliers beyond geographic barriers and favoring the potentialization of the sale of products and services¹⁹. The possibility of expanding business and saving time are some of the reasons why social networks have been so crucial for entrepreneurs²⁰.

Social networks and interaction with others can serve as information for identifying entrepreneurial opportunities²¹. The innovation of the digital age has led to a change in attitudes in the way of communication, and this has also had repercussions on the stoma therapist's entrepreneurship, even for the dissemination and carrying out of consultations remotely.

Remote consultations were recently regulated by Resolution n° 696/2022 of the Federal Nursing Council, which deals with the role of nursing in digital health and regulates telenursing. This modality of remote assistance opens up another entrepreneurial option for the stoma therapist. This resolution allows using information and communication technologies to conduct consultations, clarifications, referrals and nursing guidance at a distance, enabling communication between the nurse and the patient/family simultaneously or asynchronously²².

The challenges of emerging technologies can contribute to balancing the gap between costs and quality of care. Nursing professionals should enhance their knowledge and skills, generating new ways of providing care and using technologies, systems, theories and associated partners/stakeholders to improve and evaluate nursing practice²³.

Thus, nurses have used social networks to carry out interventions via the internet and/or text messages to encourage changes in behavior related to sexual life, promotion of physical activities, and changes in eating behavior, among others. This use happens due to the potential reach of these social networks, which can reach hundreds, thousands and even millions of users²⁴. Activities through social networks can start modestly, through family and friends, reaching friends of friends, until they can achieve more significant personal and virtual dimensions²⁰.

The participants cited the use of social networks mainly as a means of disseminating information, but it is perceived that the use of these tools for the enterprising stoma therapist does not need to be restricted to the dissemination of

products, services and information; it can go further and include teleconsultations, teleconsultations, telemonitoring, clarifying doubts of patients and their families. These tools can also be used to encourage changes in behavior and receive general feedback, among others, thus expanding the professional's entrepreneurial context.

In this way, entrepreneurship is a reason for job satisfaction due to the greater visibility of the profession and the recognition it can give to the professional. This feeling of satisfaction with what they perform was also seen as one of the main factors related to the good performance of entrepreneurial nurses, and this influences the quality of the services they develop²⁵.

As a limitation of this study, there is the fact that there are no stomal therapist participants from the North Region. Therefore, it is recommended that further research be carried out to minimize this gap, as well as deepen discussions related to entrepreneurship in nursing, especially in the context of this specialty.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to the collected and analyzed data, it was possible to verify that the facilities described for carrying out entrepreneurial activities permeated themes related to market demand, the vast entrepreneurial field of the specialty, and the importance of clinical and practical experience before starting any undertaking, and the relevance of indication by other professionals and by patients.

Also important is the influence of social media for the dissemination of the specialty and as a source of income, in addition to the feeling of satisfaction with the work performed.

These potentiating aspects may reflect the reduced offer of specialized public services to the population, which increases the demand for these professionals in a particular way, both by indication and by searching through social media, favoring growth in several fields for the specialist.

This study brings the possibility of disclosing the main potentiating aspects of the entrepreneurial process in stomatherapy, which, in turn, cooperates to improve the entire work process and service provision. Therefore, the importance of this investigation is evident as a guide for new entrepreneurial projects in stomatherapy.

Furthermore, it is expected that this research can stimulate and help the development of innovative strategies for disseminating entrepreneurial practice in stomatherapy in its various modalities. In this sense, it may enable the conquest of new fields, boost the country's economic growth, and qualify specialized nursing services through investment in these new job niches.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Manuscript extracted from the dissertation: *Empreendedorismo na enfermagem em estomaterapia: potencializando oportunidades de trabalho* (Entrepreneurship in stomatherapy nursing: enhancing job opportunity), from 2021, presented to the Graduate Program in Nursing at the State University of Rio de Janeiro. Available in: <http://www.bdtd.uerj.br/handle/1/18391>

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