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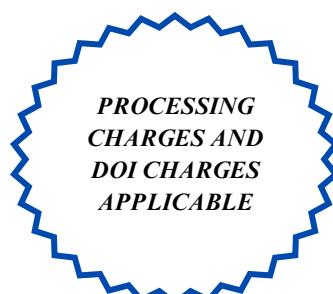
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#### Aim of NIJ

To publish high-quality original research articles in the field of nursing that are novel and innovative in their findings that make substantial theoretical and practical advances in the nursing profession.



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The Nursing Innovators Journal (NIJ) publishes authors' views, which do not necessarily reflect the editorial board's or affiliated institutions' official stance.

# From the Editorial's desk: "Need for innovations in nursing research approach for holistic health outcomes."

It is with great pleasure to present the current issue of the Nursing Innovators Journal (NIJ), an open-access, double-blinded, peer-reviewed international journal. NIJ brings together a diverse collection of scholarly research work from nursing that reflects the contemporary development, emerging evidence, and evidence-based practices within the fields of community health nursing, mental health nursing, obstetrical gynecological nursing, pediatric nursing, and medical surgical nursing in health sciences.

The present issue of the journal is unified by a central theme on innovations in nursing research, its interventions for holistic health outcomes, emphasizing the critical role of innovative educational strategies, evidence-based interventions, and holistic nursing care in addressing contemporary health challenges across the lifespan. The articles in this issue explore diverse dimensions of nursing practices, ranging from child and adolescent health, maternal and family care, clinical and surgical nursing, to elderly care from various nursing specialities. This issue highlights the impact of structured teaching programs, simulation-based learning, and evidence-based practice in achieving nursing excellence. Overall, these contributions pointed out the importance of preparing a competent, ethical, and empowered nursing workforce capable of responding to evolving healthcare needs at both national and global levels.

Recently, around the world, rapid changes are happening, from rising incidence of non-communicable diseases to unprecedented rises in mental health issues to the increased global life expectancy up to 74.5 years for males and 79.1 years for females in 2050, as projected by the United Nations. And from war-conflict-ridden countries, humanitarian crises, and greying populations to the latest developments in artificial intelligence and research advancements around the world, the scope for the caring science of nursing is huge. Conducting relevant nursing research that addresses such societal changes and issues through innovative research with a strong ethical background is a glaring need. Finding such articles has become an essential step in the dissemination of nursing research in today's academic journal world.

The concern rises when the nursing research is done for the sake of doing it, while innovation and methodological rigor are given a miss. With the threat for plagiarize content, and AI content mixed with it, the originality in research articles needs to be under strict scrutiny nowadays. As a nurse innovator, novelty must stay humane and use digital technology ethically and appropriately. The nursing researchers must be wary and alert to the lure of unethical research conduct in any form. The world is changing, with ever-evolving health care demand. Let's us put-up a discerning bird-eye view, and act to match the evolving researchable gaps beat by beat with humane innovations of caring that are culturally inclusive and sustainable ways. The need for conducting good, honest, need-based, innovative nursing research is a nonnegotiable and palpable fact.

NIJ and its editorial board are committed to providing genuine content for the readers that is based on authentic and original research and academic expertise. We ensure this commitment through our double-blinded peer-reviewed process and stringent SOP editorial process to bring out the issue of high-quality academic research based on methodology rigor and its findings for the profession and public at large.

The views and opinions expressed in the published articles are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editor, editorial board, publisher, or affiliated institutions. The journal assumes no responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the published content. On behalf of the editorial team, I extend our sincere appreciation to all contributors and readers for their continued support.

Warm regards.

**Prof. Laishangbam Bijayalakshmi Devi**  
**Editor, Nursing Innovators Journal, MKSSSBTINE, Pune**

# “Nursing Excellence in Education, Evidence, Ethics, and Empowerment”

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**Abstract:** Nursing excellence represents the highest standard of nursing practice, characterized by quality education, clinical expertise, ethical and compassionate care, evidence-based decision-making, and leadership in health care environments. Achieving and sustaining excellence in nursing is essential for developing a high-quality workforce that enhances community health outcomes, improves patient care, ensures safety, and promotes a culture of continuous improvement. Nursing excellence is a multidimensional concept built upon four critical pillars. This paper examines the contributions of each component to professional nursing excellence, their measurement using models such as NAAC, NABH, and Magnet Recognition, and their impact on health care and nurse satisfaction. It also deals with strategies for integrating them into nursing education, practice, and leadership.

**Key words:** Nursing excellence, Education, Evidence, Ethics, and Empowerment.

## I. Introduction:

Nursing encompasses the autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups, and communities, whether sick or well, in all settings. Nursing includes promoting health, preventing illness, and caring for individuals who are ill, disabled, or experiencing end-of-life care (Womb to Tomb Care). Nurses perform direct care giving, evaluate its impact, advocate for patients and for health, supervise and delegate to others, lead, manage, teach, undertake research, and develop health policy for healthcare systems. Nurses are the first-line support for individuals of all ages, families, groups, and communities, whether they are sick or well, in all settings. Nursing is a 90% women-oriented profession.

Nursing is a profession dedicated to upholding everyone's right to enjoy their highest attainable standard of health, through a shared commitment to providing collaborative, culturally safe, people-centred care and services. Nursing acts and advocate for people equitable access to health and health care, and safe, sustainable environment. The practice of nursing embodies the profession's philosophy and values by providing professional care in the most personal health-related aspects of people's lives. Nursing promotes health, protects safety and continuity in care, and manages and leads health care organizations and systems. Nursing practice is underpinned by a unique combination of science-based disciplinary knowledge, technical capability, ethical standards, and therapeutic relationships. Nursing is committed to compassion, social justice, and a better future for humanity, ICN, 2025.<sup>1</sup>

Nursing excellence is essential to the delivery of safe, ethical, and high-quality healthcare. It is achieved through a combination of continuing education, the application of evidence-based practices, adherence to ethical principles, and the empowerment of nurses to act as leaders and advocates within healthcare systems. As the complexity of healthcare increases, a focused approach to cultivating these four areas becomes critical to ensure both patient and professional outcomes are optimized. “Advocacy, promoting a safe environment, conducting research, participating in shaping health policy, and managing patient and healthcare systems are also key nursing roles, as noted by the ICN 2002.”<sup>2</sup>

## II. Defining Nursing Excellence:

Nursing excellence can be defined as a consistent, high-quality nursing workforce delivering safe, evidence-based, and people-centred care. It involves a commitment to lifelong learning, professional development, and leadership. In India, the NAAC and NABH have formalised the concept of excellence in nursing education and patient care. In the USA, the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) has formalized this concept through the Magnet Recognition Program, which identifies healthcare organizations that demonstrate excellence in nursing practices and adherence to national standards for quality patient care.<sup>3</sup>

## **Key Components of Nursing Excellence include:**

1. Quality Nursing Education: Equipping nurses with knowledge, skills, and attitudes for competent practice that involves critical and creative thinking with lifelong learning. Ongoing Professional Development through continuous education and credentialing that supports the advancement of nursing knowledge and skills, IOM, 2011.<sup>4</sup>
2. Evidence-Based Practice (EBP): Incorporating the best current evidence with clinical expertise and patient preferences, Melnyk & Fineout-Overholt, 2018.<sup>5</sup>
3. Ethics: Upholding values and principles in every aspect of care. Effectively practicing collaboration in the Interdisciplinary teamwork that ensures comprehensive, coordinated care delivery, Kornhaber et al., 2016.<sup>6</sup>
4. Empowerment through leadership, nurses at all levels are empowered to take leadership roles in improving practice environments and patient care, Sherman & Pross, 2010.<sup>7</sup>

## **Why do we need Excellence?**

1. Build a strong and diverse workforce to improve global health.
2. As a group striving for excellence, it motivates members.
3. As an individual, it facilitates personal and professional growth.

### **1. Excellence in Nursing Education: The Foundation of Competent Practice**

Education is the cornerstone of nursing excellence. It equips nurses with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary for competent practice. Lifelong learning ensures nurses remain up to date with scientific advancements, clinical guidelines, and technologies.<sup>8</sup> The **Institute of Medicine** (IOM) recommends that 80% of nurses hold a bachelor's degree or higher to improve healthcare outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, advanced degrees (e.g., MSN, NP, PhD) enable nurses to lead research, inform policy, and shape practice environments. Continuing professional development (CPD) and specialty certifications are also linked to improved patient outcomes and enhanced clinical judgment (10). Investing in nursing education at all levels fosters a workforce that is responsive, skilled, and innovative.

Excellence in Nursing Education is achieved by:

1. Well-prepared administration & faculty
2. Student-centred, innovative, interactive curriculum
3. Engaged Students
4. Evidence-based teaching, learning, and evaluations
5. Quality resources
6. Recognition of expertise
7. A clear program standards & hallmarks that raise expectations.
8. Lifelong learning

Outcome of excellence in education:

1. Learners can think critically.
2. Having a mindset for curiosity, inquisitiveness and seek knowledge beyond the curriculum.
3. Able to improvise/ innovate with creativity & originality.
4. Ready to adapt & embrace change.
5. Have high commitment/integrity to learning.
6. Can display leadership.
7. Commit to lifelong learning.
8. Competent in skills

### **NAAC criteria for Evaluation of Excellence in Nursing Education:**

NAAC stands for the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an autonomous body under the University Grant Commission (UGC). It was established to evaluate and ensure the quality of higher education institutions in India. It evaluates educational institutions based on the following seven criteria, under which institutions voluntarily enrol every 5 years.

1. Curricular Aspects
2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation
3. Research, Consultancy and Extension
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources
5. Student Support and Progression

6. Governance, Leadership, and Management
7. Innovations and Best Practices

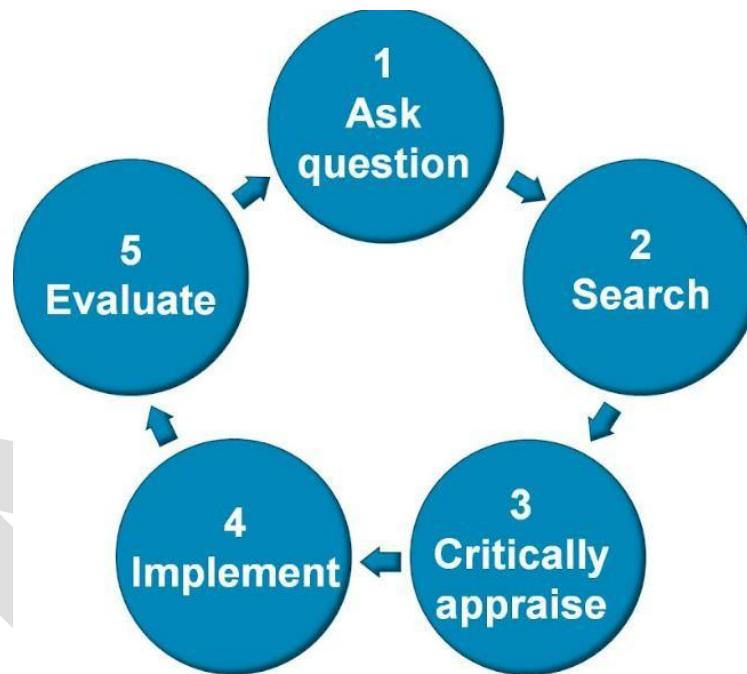
The NAAC grading system ranges from the highest grade, A++, to D, based on a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) out of 4.

Here are how the grades are structured:

A++ (CGPA: 3.76 – 4.00) – Exceptional performance  
 A+ (CGPA: 3.51 – 3.75) – Excellent quality  
 A (CGPA: 3.01 – 3.50) – Very good standard.  
 B++ to B (CGPA: 2.01 – 3.00) – Good to satisfactory  
 C (CGPA: 1.51 – 2.00) – Needs improvement  
 D (CGPA:  $\leq 1.50$ ) – Not accredited.

Every nursing education institute in India should strive to come under the ambit of NAAC to maintain excellence in nursing education.

## 2. Excellence in Research and Evidence-Based Practice: Applying Science to Care



EBP cycle for applying caring science.

In Master's and Doctoral programs in nursing, students are expected to conduct research. All nursing research conducted under recognized universities is archived in an online database called Shodh Ganga. This is a free database that is available to all. In hospitals, evidence-based nursing care is given. Evidence-based practice (EBP) combines clinical expertise, patient preferences, and the best available evidence to guide nursing care.<sup>5</sup> It improves clinical decision-making, decreases care variation, and enhances safety and quality. Nurses who regularly engage in EBP demonstrate better patient outcomes, including lower rates of hospital-acquired infections, shorter hospital stays, and fewer readmissions.<sup>11</sup> Organizations that promote EBP create cultures of inquiry, support data-driven decisions, and encourage participation in research and quality improvement initiatives. Despite its benefits, barriers such as time constraints, limited resources, and inadequate EBP training can hinder its application.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, educational initiatives and mentorship programs are crucial for supporting the implementation of EBP. The Indian Nursing Council, the apex body that oversees standardized nursing education nationwide, expects all nurses to possess these ten core competencies.

### Accreditation Board for Hospitals Quality Indices for Clinical Care Excellence:

The National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) is an agency that evaluates excellence in clinical care. It utilizes a set of quality indices, also known as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), to monitor and enhance patient care, safety, and hospital management. These indicators cover multiple domains, including patient safety, clinical outcomes, operational efficiency, and infection control.



Figure 1. Core competencies for nursing and midwifery practice by B.Sc. Nursing Graduate {Adapted from NLN Model and Massachusetts: Nurse of the Future – Core Competencies (2016)}

### Key indices include:

1. Patient Safety: Medication errors, adverse drug reactions, patient falls, near-miss reporting, and adherence to safety protocols.
2. Clinical Outcomes: Rates of hospital-acquired infections such as CAUTI, CLABSI, VAP, and surgical site infections; ICU mortality; unplanned returns to surgery.
3. Operational Efficiency: Waiting times for OPD consultation, diagnostics, and discharge; turnaround times for blood components; bed occupancy rates; nurse-to-patient ratios.
4. Infection control and safety: Hand hygiene compliance, needle stick injuries, and adherence to infection prevention protocols.
5. Monitoring these indicators enables hospitals to track their performance, identify areas for improvement, and implement corrective actions, thereby ensuring high standards of care and patient safety. The NABH mandates the regular measurement and reporting of these KPIs to maintain accreditation and promote continuous quality improvement.<sup>13</sup> Every care facility should come under the ambit of NABH to maintain care excellence.

### 3. Ethics: The Moral Compass of Nursing Practice:

Ethical principles underpin every aspect of nursing care. The **American Nurses Association** (ANA) Code of Ethics emphasizes values such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.<sup>14</sup> Nurses frequently encounter ethical dilemmas, particularly in end-of-life care, resource allocation, and patient advocacy. Ethical competence involves the ability to identify moral conflicts, reflect critically, and make decisions that uphold patients' dignity and rights.<sup>15</sup> Moral distress, which arises when nurses are constrained from acting on their ethical judgments, can compromise the quality of care and lead to burnout.<sup>16</sup> Institutions must support ethical practice by establishing ethics committees, promoting reflective practice forums, and implementing clear organizational policies. Ethics also involves professionalism in nurses. Professionalism is the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person. It involves adhering to professional standards, maintaining integrity, displaying accountability, and continuously striving for excellence in patient care.

### Ethical values needed in Nursing:

- Compassion
- caring
- Integrity
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Confidentiality
- Punctuality
- Advocacy
- Accountability
- Excellence
- Collaboration
- Ethical decision making
- Cultural competency
- Kindness
- Prudence
- Perseverance
- Communication
- Self-awareness
- Self-efficacy
- Self-esteem
- Patience
- Fairness
- Inclusiveness
- Empathy
- Fidelity
- Honesty
- Transparency/ Openness
- Loyalty
- Dignity
- Self-reflection
- Resilience
- Truthfulness
- Dedication

**In India, the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is given by the Indian Nursing Council. It is as follows:**

#### **Responsibility and Accountability of a nurse to self:**

- Appreciates a sense of self-worth and nurture it.
- Maintains standards of personal conduct reflecting credit upon the profession
- Carries out responsibilities within the professional boundaries and its framework.
- Follow standard practice given by the Indian Nursing Council.
- Is accountable for own decisions and actions.
- Is compassionate.
- Is responsible for the continuous improvement of current practices.
- Provides adequate information to individuals that allows them to make informed choices.
- Practices healthful behaviour.

#### **Professional Responsibility and Accountability of a Nurse to Nursing Practice:**

- Provides care as per standards of practice and care.
- Treats all individuals and families with human dignity in providing holistic care i.e., physical, psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects.

- Respects individuals and families in the context of traditional and cultural practices, promoting healthy practices and discouraging harmful practices.
- Presents a realistic picture truthfully in all situations for facilitating autonomous decision-making by individuals and families.
- Promotes individual and their families participate actively in their care.
- Ensure safe practice.
- Consults, coordinates, collaborates and appropriate follow up when individual care needs exceed the nurse's competence.

#### **Communication and Interpersonal Relationships of a Nurse:**

- Having good interpersonal professional relationship with individuals, families, and communities.
- Upholds the dignity of team members and maintains effective interpersonal relationships with them.
- Appreciates the nursing professional role of team members.
- Cooperates with other health team members to meets the needs of the individual, families, and communities at large.

#### **Professional Responsibility and Accountability of a nurse in valuing human being:**

- Takes appropriate action to protect individuals from harmful and unethical practices.
- Considers relevant facts while taking conscience decisions in the best interest of individuals.
- Provide platform and support individuals rights to voice out on issues affecting their health and welfare.
- Respects and supports choices made by individuals.

#### **Professional Responsibility and Accountability of a Nurse in Management:**

- Ensures appropriate allocation and utilization of available resources.
- Take active part in supervision and education of nursing students and other professional health care providers.
- Uses judgment in relation to individual competence while accepting responsibility.
- Facilitates a conducive work culture to achieve institutional objectives.
- Communicates effectively, following the appropriate channel, so communication.
- Participates in performance appraisal.
- Participates in the evaluation of nursing services.
- Take active part in policy making and its decision process through the application of the principle of equity and accessibility of services.
- Supports individual to identify their needs and sensitizes policy maker and fund provider for resource allocation.

#### **Professional Responsibility and Accountability of a Nurse with Professional Advancement:**

- Ensures the protection of human rights while pursuing the advancement of knowledge.
- Contributes to the development of nursing practice.
- Participates in determining and implementing quality care.
- Takes responsibility for updating own knowledge and competencies.
- Contributes to the core of professional knowledge by conducting and participating in research.<sup>17</sup>

Every nurse in India should be aware of and practice this code of conduct in their day-to-day practice. Ethical excellence is essential to maintaining the quality of the nursing profession. However, there are no indices to measure this.

#### **4. Empowerment: Enabling Leadership and Advocacy:**

Empowerment enables nurses to influence care delivery, participate in decision-making, and lead initiatives that improve health outcomes. Structural empowerment, a key component of the **Magnet Recognition Program**, refers to access to resources, support, and opportunities for professional growth.<sup>18</sup> Empowered nurses report higher job satisfaction, lower burnout rates, and better patient advocacy.<sup>19</sup> Shared governance models, leadership development programs, and recognition of professional contributions help build empowered work environments. Nurses empowered at the bedside and in boardrooms can drive policy changes, challenge inequities, and advocate for patient populations on a broader scale.

- Benefits of Evidence-Based Empowerment - leadership:
- Set clear goals that impact throughout from an organization's strategic direction to daily work.

- Objective decision making
- Culture of continuous learning
- Culture of inclusivity
- Flexibility / Adaptability
- Proactive management of risks.
- Prioritizing organizational and individual well-being
- Customer-driven.
- Consider the big/holistic picture.
- Having shared team spirit among team members and stakeholders.



Every nurse leader should possess personal mastery, financial management, human resource management, interpersonal effectiveness, caring, and systems thinking.

### III. Measuring Empowerment Excellence: The Magnet Model

The Magnet Recognition Program is a gold standard for nursing excellence in empowerment. This model is actively used in the USA to evaluate care setups. Nurse leaders can use this to empower themselves and other nurses. It is based on five components:

1. Transformational Leadership
2. Structural Empowerment
3. Exemplary Professional Practice
4. New Knowledge, Innovations, and Improvements
5. Empirical Outcomes

Hospitals that achieve Magnet status often report better patient outcomes, lower mortality rates, higher nurse satisfaction, and reduced staff turnover. Stimpfel et al., 2020.<sup>20</sup> The Magnet model provides both a framework and a benchmark for organizations striving for nursing excellence. Research consistently shows a positive correlation between nursing excellence and patient outcomes. For example, Aiken et al. 2014,<sup>11</sup> found that Magnet hospitals had lower patient mortality and failure-to-rescue rates compared to non-Magnet hospitals. Quality nursing care reduces hospital-acquired infections, medication errors, and readmissions. Work environments that support excellence empower nurses, improve job satisfaction, and decrease burnout. Kelly et al. 2011.<sup>17</sup> Nursing excellence encourages autonomy, professional recognition, and career growth, which in turn promotes retention.

### Challenges to Achieving Nursing Excellence:

Despite its benefits, achieving nursing excellence can be a challenging endeavour. Barriers include:

- Lack of commitment to quality
- Wanting short-term success over long-term perseverance
- Staffing shortages
- Burnout and moral distress
- Limited resources for professional development
- Resistance to change

Healthcare systems must address these challenges through supportive leadership, adequate staffing, and investment in nurse education and innovation.

### IV. Future Directions:

To sustain and advance nursing excellence, several strategies must be prioritized:

1. Leadership Development: Investing in nurse leaders at every level.
2. Technology Integration: Using digital tools to enhance care delivery and EBP.
3. Health Equity and Advocacy: Expanding the nurse's role in addressing social determinants of health.
4. Global Collaboration: Learning from international models and best practices.

The International Council of Nursing promotes excellence at all Levels of Nursing through the theme of – Our Nurses. Our Future. Its advice to all the member countries is:

- Protect and invest in the nursing profession.
- Urgently address and improve support for nurses' health and well-being by ensuring safe and healthy working conditions and respecting their rights.
- Advance strategies to recruit and retain nurses to address workforce shortages. Improve compensation for nurses to ensure fair and decent pay and benefits and uphold positive practice environments.
- Develop, implement, and finance national nursing workforce plans.
- Invest in high-quality, accredited nursing education programs to prepare more new nurses and advance career development for existing nurses.
- Enable nurses to work to their full scope of nursing practice by strengthening and modernizing regulations and investing in advanced nursing practice and nurse-led models of care.
- Recognize and value nurses' skills, knowledge, attributes, and expertise. Respect and promote nurses' roles as health professionals, scientists, researchers, educators, and leaders.
- Actively and meaningfully engage national nursing associations as critical professional partners in all aspects of health and social care policy, delivery, and leadership as the experienced and trusted voice of nursing.
- Protect vulnerable populations, uphold, and respect human rights, gender equity, and social justice. Place and uphold nursing ethics at the center of health systems' design and delivery.
- Appoint nurse leaders to executive positions of all health care organizations and government policymaking.<sup>21</sup>

### V. Conclusion:

Nursing excellence is not a singular achievement, but a dynamic process rooted in continuous education, application of evidence, ethical conduct, and empowerment. These four pillars are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. To foster nursing excellence, healthcare educational institutions and organizations must invest in education, promote an evidence-based culture, uphold ethical standards, and empower nurses as leaders and advocates. Only through this integrated approach can the nursing profession fully realize its potential to transform the healthcare system. Nursing excellence is a dynamic and essential pursuit in modern healthcare. It encompasses quality education, clinical expertise, professional development, innovation, and leadership. Programs such as NAAC, NABH, and Magnet recognition provide a framework for achieving high standards of care. By overcoming barriers and fostering a culture of continuous improvement, healthcare organizations can ensure that nursing excellence translates into better outcomes for both healthcare systems and professionals.

**VI. Recommendation:** To achieve nursing excellence, institutions must strengthen the four pillars of education, evidence, ethics, and empowerment. Continuous education should foster critical thinking, integration of technology, and lifelong learning. Evidence-based practice must be integrated into decision-making to ensure the delivery of safe and effective care. Ethical principles should guide all professional actions, promoting integrity, compassion, and accountability. Empowerment

through leadership development, shared governance, and professional recognition enables nurses to influence policy and advocate for quality care. By nurturing these four pillars, nursing can evolve into a dynamic, knowledgeable, and morally grounded profession that drives excellence in healthcare and patient outcomes.

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