

NATIONAL BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS DAY AND THE REFLECTION ON STRUCTURAL RACISM IN BRAZILIAN NURSING

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The approaching National Black Consciousness Day calls upon the nursing profession to reflect on the various policies aimed at reducing social and racial inequality in Brazil and their outcomes. In recent decades, significant affirmative action policies have been developed, notably those related to democratizing access to public higher education institutions for students from public schools, as well as Black, mixed-race, and Indigenous students.

These initiatives emerged alongside intensified discussions about historical reparations for these populations, both in academic circles and social movements. The results of these access policies have significantly transformed the representation of Black individuals among university students.

Despite the undeniable importance of these changes in addressing inequalities across economic, social, educational, and racial spheres, even after obtaining their degrees, Black individuals still face challenges in terms of visibility and recognition. This underscores the ongoing need for deeper societal changes that extend beyond access to education, ensuring true equality in professional spaces, including nursing ⁽¹⁾.

Preliminary data from an ongoing study focused on the role of nurses in primary health care in the southern region of Minas Gerais, Brazil, reveal that 78.4% of nurses identify as white; 19.3% as mixed-race; and 2.3% as Black. A national survey on the profile of Brazilian nursing indicated that, although more than 50% of the nursing workforce is composed of Black individuals, their representation is primarily concentrated at the technical level, while higher education in nursing remains predominantly occupied by white individuals ⁽²⁾.

The incipient manner in which Black nurses effectively occupy job positions, influenced by variables such as color/race and the different treatment and opportunities in the

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nursing job market based on race, constitutes institutional racism ⁽¹⁾.

Therefore, it is essential to promote discussions within training institutions and professional and class representation entities, as well as to foster research that can support decision-making bodies in creating concrete initiatives to combat structural racism and increase Black representation in higher-level nursing positions.

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Received: 08/2024

Accepted: 09/2024

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