

From “dirty work” to Professionalization: the Competence Development and the Career Predicament of the Nurse’s Aides in France

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Abstract

With the Covid-19 pandemic and the worldwide trend of population aging, “Care” has become one keyword marking the 21 century. This essay delineates the nearly 100 years history of the professional development of nurse’s aide in France. From passively receiving the dirty work delegated by nurses to actively pursuing professionalism on the job, nurse’s aides have started to urge the government to resolve the various predicaments in the care work.

The author examines the training systems of the nurse’s aide, the transition to the profession with other qualifications, professional mobility, and the policies to facilitate the development of a care labor market in France. In contrast of the growing demands of professionalism in this field, nurse’s aides face difficult working conditions, low professional prestige and compensations, and limited professional prospects. This contradiction is the challenge the French government have to overcome to achieve the goal of the senior people’s autonomy.

Keywords: Care, Nurse’s Aide (*aide-soignant*), Training, Qualification, Dirty work