



Corresponding author



Daniele de Souza Assis
E-mail: daniellesouzaassis@gmail.com

Education and professionalism as reflected in the history of the 24th Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem (1972)

Educação e profissionalismo a partir da história do
24º Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem (1972)

Educación y profesionalidad a partir de la historia del
24.º Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem (1972)

Luiz Felipe Santiago Campolina VIANA^I

Isabelle de Souza JANUARIA^I

Daniele de Souza ASSIS^I

Fernanda Batista Oliveira SANTOS^I

Joel Rolim MANCIA^{II}

^I Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – UFMG, Escola de Enfermagem,
Departamento de Enfermagem Básica. Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil.

^{II} Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – Unisinos, Faculdade de Enfermagem,
Departamento de Enfermagem. Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil.

How to cite this article (Vancouver):

Viana LFSC, Januaria IS, Assis DS, Santos FBO, Mancía JR. Education and professionalism as reflected in the history of the 24th Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem (1972). *Hist Enferm Rev Eletr.* 2026;17(Esp):e004. <https://doi.org/10.51234/here.2026.v17.527>.

ABSTRACT

Objective: to historicize the 24th Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem, organized by the ABEn/MG Chapter, and analyze it as contributing to nurses' professionalism from Eliot Freidson's perspective. **Method:** a qualitative documentary study within the field of nursing history. Data were collected from the unrestricted archive of the Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem – Minas Gerais Chapter. The analysis followed Eliot Freidson's sociological framework of professionalization. **Results:** the congress promoted nursing as a science, in addition to discussing professional practice and highlighting its close relationship with the community by making it the main theme of the event. The organization and execution of the event, conceived by and for nurses, reflect the category's effort to assert itself as a group endowed with expertise within an authoritarian political context and educational reforms. **Concluding remarks:** The 24th Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem served as a strategic mechanism for the professionalization of nursing in Brazil.

Descriptors: Conference Proceedings; Education; Nursing; History of Nursing; Professionalism.

RESUMO

Objetivo: historicizar o 24º Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem organizado pela ABEn Seção MG e analisá-lo como contributivo do profissionalismo do enfermeiro sob a ótica de Eliot Freidson. **Método:** pesquisa qualitativa, inserida no domínio da história da enfermagem, documental. Foram coletados os dados no acervo irrestrito da Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem - seção Minas Gerais. A análise seguiu o referencial sociológico da profissionalização de Eliot Freidson. **Resultado:** o congresso promoveu a cientificidade da enfermagem, além de discutir o exercício profissional e destacar a estreita relação com a comunidade ao trazê-la como tema principal do evento. A organização e execução do evento, concebido por e para enfermeiros, refletem o esforço da categoria em se afirmar como grupo dotado de expertise em um cenário político autoritário e de reformas educacionais. **Considerações finais:** o 24º Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem constituiu-se como mecanismo estratégico para a profissionalização da enfermagem no Brasil.

Descritores: Anais de Congressos; Educação; Enfermagem; História da Enfermagem; Profissionalismo.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: contextualizar el 24.º Congreso Brasileiro de Enfermagem, organizado por la ABEn – Sección de Minas Gerais, y analizarlo como un factor que contribuye a la profesionalización de la enfermería, desde la perspectiva de Eliot Freidson. **Método:** investigación documental histórico en el ámbito de la historia de la enfermería, utilizando un enfoque cualitativo. Los datos se recopilaban a partir del fondo documental de libre acceso de la Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem – Sección de Minas Gerais. El análisis siguió el marco sociológico de profesionalización de Eliot Freidson. **Resultados:** el congreso promovió la naturaleza científica de la enfermería, además de debatir la práctica profesional y destacar la estrecha relación con la comunidad, convirtiéndola en el tema principal del evento. La organización y celebración del congreso, concebidas por y para enfermeros, reflejan el esfuerzo de la profesión por afirmarse como un grupo con competencias especializadas en un panorama político autoritario marcado por reformas educativas. **Consideraciones finales:** el 24.º Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem sirvió como mecanismo estratégico para la consolidación de la enfermería como profesión en Brasil.

Descriptores: Actas de Conferencias; Educación; Enfermería; Historia de la Enfermería; Profesionalismo.

INTRODUCTION

Scientific events play a fundamental role in the dissemination of science, serving as spaces in which professionals and researchers from a given field present evidence and discuss practices⁽¹⁾. In the health sector, and particularly in Brazilian nursing, conferences have historically assumed the locus for bringing together values, culture, political articulation, and the production of professional knowledge⁽²⁾.

Within the broader context of scientific event production in nursing in Brazil, the work of the centennial Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem (ABEn, Brazilian Nursing Association) stands out. Founded in 1926 through the initiative of the first nurses formally trained in the country, the organization has accumulated, up to the year 2025, a legacy that includes the organization of 75 Congressos Brasileiros de Enfermagem (CBEn, Brazilian Nursing Congress), in addition to other events focused on education and research, always guided by themes of interest for the development of the profession⁽³⁾.

The first CBEn, then called the “Congresso Nacional de Enfermagem,” was held in 1947 and became consolidated as the main scientific event of the profession, establishing an important space for strengthening nursing through the discussion of topics relevant to the field. In this context, the expansion of nursing schools in the country and the restructuring of ABEn fostered the creation of its state sections, with the aim of preserving the unity of the profession and promoting the development of nursing in regions where professional training already existed⁽⁴⁾.

The first chapter to be created was São Paulo, in 1945, immediately followed by the Federal District section (Rio de Janeiro), and from that point on, ABEn expanded to the other states of the federation⁽⁴⁾. With

the understanding of the importance of Brazilian nurses' participation in the Association's activities, the congresses began to be held also in the states that had already established their sections. The 4th *Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem* was then held in Salvador, Bahia, under the leadership of President Waleska Paixão⁽⁵⁾.

In this context, the Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem Minas Gerais Chapter (ABEn/MG) stands out as the fourth section established in the country, founded in 1947 by Waleska Paixão, who served as its president from 1947 to 1949⁽⁵⁾. Throughout its trajectory, the organization has faced numerous challenges and achieved significant accomplishments. The Minas Gerais chapter supported generations of nurses who, upon assuming leadership positions both within the section and the national entity, as well as in decision-making bodies in the health field, contributed significantly to strengthening nursing in Minas Gerais and in Brazil⁽⁴⁻⁶⁾.

It is also noteworthy that the 1968–1972 administration of ABEn/MG made efforts to preserve, organize, and democratize access to its documentary production, based on the understanding that such records represent the living memory of the section and constitute a substantial part of the historical efforts undertaken in favor of the professional development of nursing⁽⁷⁾.

In this effort to preserve and organize institutional memory undertaken by ABEn/MG, a collection related to the 24th CBEEn, held in 1972, stood out. The richness of detail found in these institutional, thematic, and political documentary sets from that period sparked the interest of researchers dedicated to the History of Nursing, leading to the formulation of the following questions: What strategies did ABEn/MG mobilize to host the 24th *Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem* (1972)? Who were the social actors involved in this process, and how did they articulate themselves within the field of nursing in Minas Gerais to make it possible? Did the themes discussed resonate with the socio-sanitary realities experienced in the health sector of Minas Gerais and Brazil during that historical period?

Within the field of nursing historiography, scientific events have been recognized as strategic spaces for collective articulation, knowledge production, and the affirmation of professional identity^(8,9). Although their role in the historical consolidation of the profession is widely acknowledged, few studies analyze them as active instruments of professionalization from a more robust analytical perspective⁽¹⁰⁾. In this scenario, approaches inspired by the Sociology of Professions – particularly the formulations of Eliot Freidson – contribute to understanding how specialized knowledge, organizational structures, and institutional discourses operate in legitimizing and strengthening professional groups⁽¹¹⁾. Congresses such as the CBEEn, for example, symbolically express the fundamental pillars of professionalization: they function as spaces for legitimizing expertise by promoting debate and the dissemination of nursing knowledge; they enable the exercise of collective autonomy by bringing professionals together around political and educational agendas; and they act as mechanisms of institutional consecration, thereby strengthening the identity of the profession⁽⁵⁻¹²⁾.

In the case of the CBEEn, it can be understood that it was created in line with the premise that, in order for a profession to consolidate itself, in addition to having an association, it also needed a journal, with the purpose of disseminating the knowledge produced by nurses, as well as exchanging opinions and strengthening the organization. This formula was rigorously followed by ABEn under the guidance of Edith de Magalhães Fraenkel, who had incorporated these principles into her training. The creation of congresses can be included within this agenda⁽¹³⁾.

It is believed that ABEn/MG has always held a seminal importance for nursing's associative activities, considering that two other congresses had already been held in Belo Horizonte: the 8th, in 1955, and the 13th, in 1960. This organization took place in close alignment between what was advocated by ABEn Central and the sectional ABEn, aiming to meet the national interests of the profession.

Therefore, it is assumed that spaces for collective articulation and knowledge production, such as scientific congresses, are fundamental for building a solid professional identity, for valuing nursing work, and for strengthening its presence in health decision-making arenas. Analyzing these events makes it possible to understand how the profession organizes itself, positions itself politically, and affirms itself as an autonomous field of knowledge and practice.

Furthermore, this study aligns with the commitments of the United Nations 2030 Agenda, particularly Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 3, which aim to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages, and number 4, which seeks to guarantee inclusive, equitable, and quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities⁽¹⁴⁾. By investigating the formative, political, and organizational processes of nursing, this study contributes to reflections on the consolidation of more equitable health systems and on the critical qualification of nurses. Additionally, it is also related to SDG 17, which aims to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships, as it highlights how institutional, academic, and

political articulations surrounding the organization of the 24th CBEEn contributed to consolidating nursing as a profession and strengthening its presence in health decision-making spaces.

In this context, this study is justified by the scarcity of historical analyses that take scientific congresses^(15,16) as primary sources for understanding the professionalization of Brazilian nursing. By examining the 24th CBEEn as a mechanism for the institutional strengthening of ABEn/MG, the aim is to highlight how events of this nature contributed to building a cohesive professional identity and to the social recognition of nursing as a field of specialized knowledge and practice. Historical investigations such as this one align with the health research priorities defined by the Ministry of Health, while also contributing to the consolidation of public policies through the critical understanding of their institutional and professional frameworks^(2,14). It is understood that the consolidation of a profession requires not only the technical training of its members but also the construction of collective spaces that foster the affirmation of specialized knowledge, the political organization of the category, and the social recognition of its authority within the health field. The analysis of the congress, as a symbolic and organizational instrument, allows for the visualization of the mechanisms that sustain this process, highlighting the historical strategies mobilized by nursing to strengthen its field of practice^(2,16).

OBJECTIVE

To historicize the 24th CBEEn organized by ABEn Minas Gerais and analyze it as contributing to nursing professionalism from the perspective of Eliot Freidson.

METHODS

Ethical aspects

The present study did not require ethical approval, as its documentary corpus is composed of unrestricted public archive sources from ABEn/MG, with no conflicts of interest, in accordance with Resolutions No. 466/2012 and 510/2016 of the Conselho Nacional de Saúde (National Health Council).

Type of study

This is a descriptive study in the field of History, within the historical-social dimension, situated in the domain of nursing history, with a qualitative approach based on documentary history⁽¹⁷⁾. The CONSolidated criteria for REporting Qualitative research (COREQ), Brazilian Portuguese version⁽¹⁸⁾, was used to ensure transparency and completeness in the methodological description. The research drew on documents from the public and unrestricted historical archive of ABEn/MG.

Methodological Procedures

The identified documents were handled according to the archive's technical guidelines and, with proper institutional authorization, fully digitized. After the digitization process, the files were organized and systematized into thematic and chronological folders to facilitate subsequent analysis. To ensure data preservation and security, the documents were stored on the Google Drive online platform, in a dedicated repository with restricted access for the research team.

The cataloging work followed the principles of historical research, maintaining the records in their original form and preserving metadata such as dates, authorship, and document typology. In addition, a documentary analysis form was created containing essential information about each item in the collection, such as title, origin, production context, main content, and initial analytical notes. The selection of documents followed criteria of historical relevance and adherence to the research object, focusing on materials related to the organization and execution of the 24th CBEEn.

Study setting

The spatial and temporal scope of this study encompasses the city of Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, between the years 1971 and 1972, a period in which Brazil was experiencing the intensification of the civil-military

dictatorship. The year 1971 was adopted as the starting point because it marked the beginning of the mobilizations and organizational efforts for the 24th CBEn. The final milestone, 1972, corresponds to the holding of the event, a moment in which the professional category was in a state of effervescence, immersed in the intense discussions that culminated in Resolution No. 04/72, of February 25, 1972, which established the regulation of the minimum curriculum for Nursing and Obstetrics programs in the country.

Data gathering and organization

Since the beginning of 2024, a partnership has been established between ABEn/MG and the School of Nursing at the *Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* (EE-UFGM, Federal University of Minas Gerais) to support the preservation of the association's documentary collection. Thus, this collection is currently under the care of the School of Nursing's Memory Center (CEMENF) for inventory, cleaning, and cataloging purposes. The team's daily work with the documentation revealed a series of sources of interest for the history of Brazilian nursing, including those used in this study.

The collection of documentary records was carried out between June and August 2024. The documentary corpus of this study consists of the "Minutes Book" referring to meetings of the executive committee and subcommittees, and the "Official Theme Book of the 24th Congresso Brasileiro de Enfermagem." To ensure consistency and robustness in the analysis, the documentary corpus was cross-checked with complementary records from the period, among which stand out ABEn's institutional bulletins, publications from the *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem* (REBEn), and congress promotional materials such as posters, programs, and invitations.

Data sources

The Minutes Book, with a gray cover featuring stripes and black borders, is an original handwritten manuscript of 100 pages referring to the minutes of ABEn/MG, documenting the meetings of the Executive Committee and the Subcommittees of the 24th CBEn. It is initialed by the president of the Executive Committee and president of ABEn/MG, Izaltina Goulart Azevedo. The document is stamped and registered at the Jero Oliva Notary Office – Civil Registry of Legal Entities, on December 13, 1971. The content of the manuscript was evaluated based on the credibility of the source, written by the event's secretary, Carmelita Pinto Rabelo. The Official Theme Book is an orange-covered volume that presents the number of papers and abstracts submitted and approved for the event, as well as the title of the official award granted during the congress.

Data Analysis

After reading the documents, information relevant to the initial research objective was collected. In the documentary analysis, eligibility criteria included records that mentioned aspects related to the event's venue, the social actors involved, partner institutions, donations received, awards granted, presentation of papers, number of abstracts submitted, as well as the main themes debated during the congress.

Finally, the data were organized into categories, namely: Behind the Scenes of the 24th CBEn: committees, partnerships, and the consolidation of institutional autonomy; Marking the Boundaries of Knowledge: training, knowledge, and recognition at the 24th CBEn; Agents of Professionalization: elites and social actors in the construction of the 24th CBEn; and Echoes of the 24th CBEn: nursing, society, and the affirmation of its authority. The empirical data are presented in the results, and the analysis was discussed using Eliot Freidson's theoretical framework on professionalization in health⁽¹¹⁻¹⁹⁾.

RESULTS

Behind the Scenes of the 24th CBEn: committees, partnerships, and the consolidation of institutional autonomy.

The decision to host the 24th CBEn in Belo Horizonte mobilized ABEn/MG in a coordinated effort of planning and organization. As recorded in the association's meeting logbook, the first deliberative meetings took place on September 9 and December 12, 1971, during which the Executive Committee was formed and ten additional subcommittees were established, each responsible for different areas: finance, publicity, lodging, reception, venue preparation, registration, monitoring, social activities, course coordination, and paper distribution.

At the time the event was being organized, ABEn was under the 17th administration of the National Board (1968–1970), presided over by Amália Corrêa de Carvalho, a faculty member at the School of Nursing of the Universidade de São Paulo (EE-USP)⁽²⁰⁾. At the state level, the Minas Gerais Section was under its 14th administration (1970–1972), presided over by Izaltina Goulart de Azevedo, then director of the EE-UFGM⁽⁷⁾. The full composition of the national and sectional boards, including the positions of vice-presidency, secretaries, treasurers, and the fiscal council, is presented in Table 1⁽²¹⁾.

Table 1 – Composition of the ABEn National Board and the Minas Gerais Chapter Board, 1972

ABEn Nacional 17 ^a board (1968–1970)		ABEn Minas Gerais 14 ^a board (1970–1972)	
Position	Name	Position	Name
President	Amália Corrêa de Carvalho	President	Izaltina Goulart de Azevedo
1st Vice-president	Maria Dolores Lins de Andrade	Vice-presidency	Laura Consuelo Aguiar Enny Ennes Águida Stemler de Oliveira
2nd Vice-president	Circe de Melo Ribeiro	1st Secretaries	Carmosina Lopes Elba Tanabal Gomide
1st Secretary	Edla Dalva Moreira	2nd Secretary	Maria do Rosário Melo
2nd Secretary	Glycon José Bernardes	1st Treasurer	Emília Pereira de Souza
1st Treasurer	Maria Tereza Notarnicola	2nd Treasurers	Maria Marta Costa Dilza de Brito Guimarães
2nd Treasurer	Marilda F. Borges	Fiscal Council	Algina Soares Maria Aparecida Sampaio Clélia Álvares de Oliveira Nize G. de Mendonça
Fiscal Council	Elvira de Felice Souza Izaura Barbosa Lima Aracy Coimbra		

Source: Authors (2026)⁽²¹⁾.

In this institutional context, the presidency of ABEn/MG, together with the board and the treasury, initiated the process of defining the composition of the committees responsible for organizing the congress and distributing responsibilities among their members. The formalization of these committees allowed different dimensions of the event to be coordinated simultaneously, facilitating the progress of logistical, scientific, and institutional stages.

The logistical deliberations were decisive in ensuring the structure required for the congress. The venue chosen for the event was the Minas Gerais State Health Department, with the Palácio das Artes reserved exclusively for the opening ceremony. A partnership was also established with EE-UFGM, which hosted a support office for the congress's organizational activities within the institution, in addition to providing assistance in the graphic production of materials such as posters and informational bulletins.

Additional records highlighted the planning of participant lodging in public hospitals, such as Hospital da Baleia and Hospital das Clínicas, with support from the Red Cross School.

Specific uniforms were produced for monitors and committee members, designed by a local tailor.

Marking the Boundaries of Knowledge: training, knowledge, and recognition at the 24th CBEn

The scientific program of the 24th CBEn was organized around the central theme “The training of nursing professionals at the three levels; professional practice; the nurse and the community; recent nursing research” (Figure 1). The definition of this thematic axis took place within the institutional organization of the congress, involving ABEn's board, the scientific committee, and the groups responsible for the event's programming. This choice reflected the core concerns of Brazilian nursing at that time, particularly those related to professional training at different levels, the regulation and consolidation of nursing practice, and the expansion of interfaces among care, research, and community engagement. A significant portion of the discussions and scientific contributions presented at the event was later published in the *Revista Brasileira de Enfermagem*.

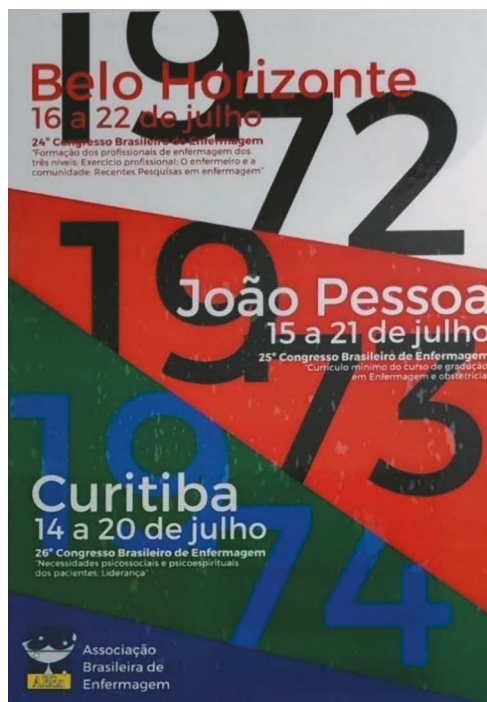


Figure 1 - Poster released by the ABEn Nacional regarding the *Congressos Brasileiros de Enfermagem* Source: ABEn Nacional.

A total of 42 papers were presented as free-theme submissions. Five of these focused on the quality of professional training, covering the technical, auxiliary, and higher-education levels. They discussed the pedagogical responsibilities of nursing schools, the need to expand practical training settings, and the role of directors and faculty members in educating new nurses. In the axis dedicated to recent research, 11 papers highlighted advances in hospital care and nursing diagnosis. Other topics ranged from audits in nursing services to experiments with assistive technologies, such as the use of chemical purifiers for microbiological air control. There were also studies on the effects of respiratory exercises in chronic pulmonary diseases and proposals for comprehensive health care.

Studies were presented on the ethical and legal aspects of professional practice, with particular emphasis on the creation of the *Sistema Conselho Federal* and *Conselhos Regionais de Enfermagem* (COFEN/CORENs, Federal and Regional Nursing Council System), which would be established the following year, in 1973.

A noteworthy contribution was the paper titled "Observação: descrição de métodos para desenvolvimento desta habilidade em estudantes, na disciplina de Fundamentos de Enfermagem," reported by Wanda de Aguiar Horta, the first Brazilian nursing theorist.

Agents of Professionalization: elites and social actors in the construction of the 24th CBE

The organization of the 24th CBE was made possible through a broad network of social actors and institutional collaborations that went beyond the organizational boundaries of ABEn/MG, mobilizing governmental, academic, civil, and military sectors. The event registered 1,051 participants from different regions of the country, demonstrating its national scope. Among the cities that recorded participation or sent formal messages of support via telegram were Recife, Florianópolis, Aracaju, Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Salvador, Teresina, Fortaleza, Guanabara, Niterói, Juiz de Fora, Maceió, Goiânia, Volta Redonda, and São Luís, revealing the wide institutional mobilization surrounding the congress.

The financial sustainability of the event was ensured through multiple strategies, including participant registrations, institutional support, and donations from public and private entities. Documentary records indicate contributions from companies and institutions, such as 500 cruzeiros from Laboratório Roche; 5,000

cruzeiros from Laboratórios Unitrops and Sidney Ross for the installation of a booth; 1,500 cruzeiros from Laboratório Darroro; 1,000 cruzeiros from *Banco Mineiro do Oeste*; and 500 cruzeiros from the Companhia Energética de Minas Gerais (CEMIG). To manage the funds raised, the organizing committee designated *Banco Mineiro do Oeste* and Banco de Crédito Real de Minas Gerais as the institutions responsible for safeguarding and handling the congress's financial transactions.

The records also indicate the use of differentiated registration fees, with amounts charged to students significantly lower than those applied to trained professionals - an approach that helped expand student participation in the event while simultaneously reinforcing the financial balance of the initiative.

Among the actions undertaken by the organizing committee, noteworthy efforts included a formal request to the university press for the printing of 2,000 letterhead sheets and envelopes, and negotiations with the Tourism Department of the Belo Horizonte City Hall (PBH) to organize transportation for congress participants. Support from military authorities was also secured for the opening and closing ceremonies.

The congress further benefited from the political support of key state and municipal leaders. Among those involved were the governor of Minas Gerais, Dr. Rondon Pacheco; the mayor of Belo Horizonte, Oswaldo Pieruccetti; the state secretary of health, Fernando Megre Veloso; and the UFMG rector at the time, Marcello de Vasconcellos Coelho.

In the field of cultural and academic partnerships, the UFMG School of Fine Arts was responsible for creating the congress's official poster, produced by Professor Eduardo de Paula, while the School of Communication at the same institution supported the event with journalistic coverage and the production of bulletins.

The representative dimension of the event was further expressed through the presence of delegations from several Brazilian capitals and cities, including Recife, Florianópolis, Aracaju, Brasília, Salvador, Teresina, Fortaleza, Guanabara, Niterói, Maceió, Goiânia, Volta Redonda, São Luís, and Juiz de Fora, many of which sent formal representatives when their top leaders were unable to attend.

Echoes of the 24th CBEn: nursing, society, and the affirmation of its authority

It is noteworthy that the 24th CBEn included a Symposium titled "The Nurse and the Community." This symposium brought together presentations on the social role of the nurse, the relationship with nursing technicians and assistants, and the ethical responsibility of nursing professionals in promoting community care. In this context, during the II Plenary Organizational Session⁽²¹⁾, two papers were presented that reinforced the interface between nursing and the social body: "Responsabilidade do enfermeiro na prestação de serviços à comunidade" and "Papel social da enfermeira na comunidade." The reports were delivered by professionals from different regions of the country—one from the state of São Paulo and another from Amazonas—highlighting the social reach and national relevance of the event.

DISCUSSION

The role of ABEn/MG as the promoter of a nationwide event, within the authoritarian context of the Brazilian military dictatorship, highlights its ability to establish itself as a collective actor in the health field, articulating different segments of nursing around a political and professional project aimed at strengthening the identity and social legitimacy of the professional category, as postulated in Freidsonian sociology⁽²²⁾.

Recent studies reinforce this interpretation, emphasizing that organizational entities such as ABEn directly contribute to the development of expertise, autonomy, and self-regulation in nursing through institutional, normative, and scientific actions^(22,23).

The 24th CBEn represented significant milestones for the profession, given that, even in its early organizational stages, it mobilized authorities from the political, health, and education sectors in Minas Gerais, such as the Secretary of Health, the President of UFMG, the Mayor of Belo Horizonte, and the Governor of the State. The participation of these leaders strengthened the process of social valorization of nursing by demonstrating its capacity for mobilization and articulation with state power structures. From Freidson's perspective, this movement expresses one of the pillars of professionalism by consolidating nursing as a holder of specialized knowledge, elevating its professional status, since in this context the event was socially recognized by local authorities as possessing legitimate expertise to influence and develop discussions in the field of care and health. It is worth noting that it was a strategy of the association to invite high-ranking authorities to participate in the event and

to join the organizing committee as honorary presidents and/or honorary members, and in the end letters of appreciation from these authorities were always presented⁽²¹⁾. Moreover, the broad financial sponsorship obtained clarified the magnitude of the event and reinforced its relevance on the national stage^(23,24).

This representativeness is marked by advances in scientific knowledge and by the reaffirmation of the centrality of education and professional practice in consolidating nursing as a socially relevant field⁽²⁵⁾.

By bringing together specialists and leaders in the field to discuss topics such as the qualification of professionals at all levels of education, auditing in nursing services, and the profession's social responsibility, the event not only responded to the urgencies of its time but also succeeded in projecting strategies for the internal regulation of the category—practices that remain current in the face of contemporary challenges in the profession. These discussions anticipated concerns that today are directly aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being and SDG 4 – Quality Education, which highlight the importance of effective and equitable health systems supported by qualified and socially committed professionals⁽²⁶⁾.

The active presence of EE-UFGM in organizing the congress, in collaboration with ABEn/MG, demonstrates the existence of a consolidated institutional structure that fostered knowledge, experiences⁽¹⁵⁾, and prestige relations in favor of strengthening the field. This articulation, far from being occasional, dates back to the early years of the Minas Gerais section: in 1950, the first director of ABEn/MG, Waleska Paixão, also held the position of director of the then Carlos Chagas School of Nursing⁽²⁷⁾. ABEn's policy of holding its events in connection with universities and health institutions where its sections are located continues to this day, facilitating the entity's articulation with its social group. The presence of Carmelita Pinto Rabelo, professor and vice-director of the school (1968–1971), in the Executive Secretariat reinforces the institution's role as a structuring nucleus of the organization⁽⁷⁾.

In this context, social actors from EE-UFGM assumed strategic positions and led the main activities of the congress, activating institutional and academic networks that ensured the event's legitimacy and its capacity to produce professional guidelines and consensus⁽¹⁷⁾. The congress, therefore, not only mirrored the reality of nursing at the time but also actively contributed to the construction of its technical and political authority, reaffirming the profession's position as a specialized, articulated field in constant mobilization⁽²⁸⁾.

The organization of the Congress was under ABEn's control through the Executive Committee, always coordinated by a member of the board, as well as through the coordination of the recommendations committee, which in 1972 was chaired by Gleite de Alcântara. In addition, the topic appeared on the board's meeting agenda for an entire year to monitor the work. For the 24th CBEn, four meetings were held (two in Rio de Janeiro, one in São Paulo, and one in Brasília) with the participation of Izaltina Goulart de Azevedo, president of the executive committee^(21–29).

Professional autonomy is achieved before the State when the profession demonstrates its usefulness to society⁽²²⁾. Thus, analyzing the theme of the 24th CBEn implies recognizing the need to advance discussions on the current situation of continuing education and scientific research to strengthen the profession. Meanwhile, in 1972, an important milestone for the scientific development of Brazilian nursing was consolidated: the first Master's program in Nursing in Brazil, established by the Anna Nery School of Nursing at the *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro*. This historic achievement highlighted the deepening of quality in the areas of research, teaching, and professional practice.

In this sense, it not only enabled the training of the first generation of nursing researchers but also created an important opportunity for strengthening the profession by promoting, at the graduate level, the production of specialized knowledge unique to the field. In addition to emphasizing the nurse's responsibility in community care and the use of innovative methodologies, the event fostered capacity-building and the development of internal expertise, paving new paths for granting nursing scientific, technical, and theoretical authority. The event thus became a singular space where nurses could express themselves not only on behalf of the profession but also in defense of their ethical, social, and political commitment to society.

The presentation of Wanda Horta's work, by provoking critical perspectives on the field of practice in training, supported discussions around the patient's ability to participate in their own care. The researcher's presence at the event is situated within the context of consolidating the nursing theories movement, especially with the publication of "*Teoria das Necessidades Humanas Básicas*"⁽⁸⁾ in 1972, constituting a strategy to strengthen research results that grounded the development of her ideas about the profession. At the same time, it aligned with the broader context of the period in favor of greater scientific rigor and autonomy, contributing to the

valorization of the nurse as a singular subject endowed with specialized expertise in the field of care and health assistance. The congress therefore served as the major showcase for innovation within the professional landscape. The continuous development of teaching, research, and care models, in harmony with scientific advances and societal demands, is essential for the growth of the profession and for elevating the quality of care provided to the population. In this way, a path of valorization is built, presenting nursing as a unique and necessary science for society, which lays the foundation for greater professional status ⁽²¹⁻²⁵⁾.

The creation and development of Nursing Professional Councils constitute a fundamental pillar for the recognition of the profession. It is noteworthy that this discussion had already been underway since the 1950s. The debates on the ethical and legal aspects of professional practice, highlighted at the 24th CBen, reinforced the need for a solid regulatory framework. So, in 1973, Law No. 5,905 established the Federal and Regional Nursing Councils. From Freidson's perspective, this process fosters the self-regulation of nursing and the development of its professional credential by establishing a body responsible for regulation, oversight, and ethical guidance ⁽²¹⁾.

The *Congressos Brasileiros de Enfermagem* (Brazilian Nursing Congresses) have been fundamental to the construction ⁽¹⁵⁾ of the history of nursing in Brazil, promoting critical reflection on the challenges of the profession and encouraging the production of knowledge aimed at the growing complexity and improvement of professional practice. The congresses also represent important instruments used by ABEn to convey its ideology, consolidating its position regarding Brazilian nursing ⁽²⁾.

The fact that the 24th CBen was organized by nurses associated with ABEn/MG strengthens the profession's status, identity, and credentialism. These developments underpin the identity-based expertise specific to the profession, generating singular and exclusive debates - led by nurses - aimed at advancing nursing's scientific development for the benefit of nursing itself ^(30,31).

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study presents limitations related to documentary analysis, since the corpus examined is restricted and does not exhaust the complexity of the processes and events investigated, which may limit the apprehension of aspects that were not recorded or that remain absent from the available sources. Moreover, due to the temporal scope adopted, the findings of this research cannot be generalized to other editions of the event analyzed or to different periods.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF NURSING, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

In the midst of an authoritarian regime in 1972, nursing presented itself to society as a specialized and disciplined field, capable of responding to the demands of the health system, but also as a mobilized collective able to produce its own guidelines and internal consensus. In this sense, the 24th CBen organized by ABEn/MG constituted a strategic mechanism for strengthening nursing, in which debates on education, practice, and professional activity were consolidated, as well as the forms of social recognition and political affirmation of the category as a profession in the process of consolidation within the Brazilian context.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research made it possible to recognize that ABEn/MG mobilized a robust set of institutional and political-pedagogical articulations that went beyond geographical boundaries to carry out the event. By activating networks formed by academic leaders, faculty members, and administrators - especially from the EE-UFGM - the entity promoted a congress that reflected nursing's efforts to affirm its autonomy and technical knowledge, reinforcing its value and responsibility to the community in the face of the challenges encountered at the time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We thank the Associação Brasileira de Enfermagem - Minas Gerais Chapter for the support and for making its documentary collection available.

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Submission: 2026 Apr 13
Reformulation: 2026 July 09
Approval: 2026 July 20

Editor-in-Chief: Maria Itayra Padilha
Associate editor: Maria Itayra Padilha

Ad hoc reviewers:
 Nivia Vanessa Carneiro dos Santos
 Rodrigo Nogueira da Silva

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Conception of the study: LFSCV, ISJ, FBOS
 Data collection: LFSCV, ISJ, FBOS
 Data analysis: LFSCV, ISJ, FBOS, JRM, DSA
 Manuscript writing: LFSCV, ISJ, DSA, FBOS, JRM
 Critical revision for important intellectual content: ISJ, FBOS, DSA