



## CURRENT PANORAMA OF THE THEORY OF TRAVELBEE: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to systematize scientific production about the current literature panorama based on Joyce Travelbee Theory. An integrative review based on the databases of the Virtual Health Library (VHL), the Portal of Periodicals CAPES and EBSCO-HOST. The descriptors were: "Psychiatric Nursing" AND "Nurses-Patient Relationship" AND "Nursing Theory". Publications were included in English, Spanish and Portuguese and were available electronically in full. Letters to the editor and those published outside the period 2012-2017 were excluded. The study population was 3,078 articles, but only five answered the guiding question and the selection criteria. These articles were organized into frames and content analysis was performed with categorization of the findings. It was evidenced that the majority of the publications were national ones, predominantly of 2015, with level of evidence VI. The studies allowed the study to generate two categories of discussion, the first one is: Travelbee Theory and the mental health area; and the second one is: Travelbee Theory and the specific contexts of Nursing. It was possible to verify the importance and the presence that this theoretical reference still has in scientific journals, even though decades have passed since the last publication of the theory. Therefore, one point is the promotion of the adoption of Travelbee referential in the academic and professional environments in which the Nursing discipline is applied.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nursing theories have different purposes, considered intellectual inventions intended to describe, explain, predict or prescribe the phenomena related to the profession. It was thanks to the theories that the process of Nursing was consolidated as an applied discipline and academic in health. They are categorized, as authors McEwen and Wills (2016), as great theories, medium-range theories and practical theories. Regarding the Theory of Person-to-Person Relationship, developed by Travelbee (1982), it is categorized as a great theory of the interactional process of nursing care. In 1966, it was first published as "Interpersonal Aspects of Nursing" and was reissued in 1971. In 1982, the second edition of the book

"Intervention in Psychiatric Nursing: Process in the One-to-One Relationship" was launched. This book was used as the main reference for the present study. To contextualize the theory, it is necessary to refer to Joyce Travelbee, a nurse who was born in 1926 and died in 1973. However, despite her short life, she contributed significantly to the improvement of nursing science, especially in the area of psychiatry. She graduated in Nursing in 1946, at the University of New Orleans, in the United States of America. He earned his master's degree in Nursing from Louisiana State University, USA. He began his doctorate in Florida in 1973, but died prematurely in the same year. Travelbee was strongly instigated by the legacy of Hildegard E. Peplau's Theory and Ida Orlando, as well as the influences of Viktor E. Frankl, creator of Logotherapy and also of psychoanalytic and

humanist school concepts, being applicable in the Nursing method to be developed with the patient, in a person-to-person relationship (Araújo, 2011). The process of the person-to-person relationship, proposed by this theory, has objectives that contemplate the uniqueness of the beings involved in human relations. In this context, nurses provide the patient with help in dealing with their "here and now" problems, helping the health user to create concepts of their own problems, self-perception of their experiences, stimulation of their own individuality and, in addition to that, to face their problems, providing the vision of new possibilities and / or new patterns of behavior. The nurse should help the patient to integrate socially, to find meaning in his own illness, seeking his "for that" (Bezerra *et al.*, 2015). It is considered, therefore, that the paradigms of the theory and its perspectives directed to the interpersonal and to the holistic relations, make the process of transition to the psychosocial field more effective. Thus, it is also believed that such elements and perspectives, contemplated within the Theory of Person-to-Person Relationship, are fundamental to guide the training and practice of the nurse in Mental Health (Rodrigues; Santos; Spricigo, 2012). From this point of view, the following question has arisen: what nursing care strategies, based on the theoretical model of Travelbee, are available in the literature? Focusing to respond to such questioning and enable the contribution of this compilation of nursing strategies and interventions to the deepened knowledge with incentive to change paradigms of care practice, the study is justified and becomes relevant since it comprises an updated and unified approach of the knowledge produced in the context of the extended clinic and in the subjectivity of the individual, family and community. The objective of the present study was to systematize the scientific production about the current literature panorama based on Joyce Travelbee Theory.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

It is an integrative review of literature, whose purpose is to gather and summarize research results on a particular topic or issue. In turn, they include studies that are broadly analyzed in relation to their objectives, materials and methods, allowing the reviewer to explore pre-existing knowledge about the subject under investigation, in order to guarantee and generate a more reliable scientific production, in order to respect, to the maximum extent, the epistemology of the primary data (Soares *et al.*, 2014). The guiding question of the study was: Which nursing care strategies, based on Joyce Travelbee's Theory of Person-to-Person Relationship, available in the literature?

The technique used for data collection was a bibliographical survey of the MEDLINE, LILACS, BDENF-Enfermagem, SCOPUS and SCIELO databases, available in the Virtual Health Library (VHL), in the CAPES Periodical Portal and in EBSCO-HOST. The descriptors used, defined by the Descriptors in Health Sciences (DECs), were: "Mental Health" AND "Nursing Care" AND "Theory of Nursing". Inclusion criteria were: publications in English, Spanish and Portuguese, that responded to the guiding question and that it was available electronically, in its entirety. Excluded letters to the editor and those published outside the period 2012-2017. The cut of the last five years was chosen because this review served as an investigative parameter for a second research, which will be developed later by the authors. Were founded 161 articles in MEDLINE, 27 in LILACS, 21 in BDENF-Enfermagem, 69 in

SCOPUS and 60 in SCIELO, totaling 338 articles. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 21 scientific publications were identified. Subsequently, a thorough reading of the title, abstract and the complete work was done, a final quantitative of five articles that answered the guiding question and contemplated the objective of the study. The description of the selection process followed the recommendations of the PRISMA model, which indicates the steps of identifying the publications in the databases, performs title and abstract screening, with full reading for eligibility and includes those that will be part of the sample (Bernardo, 2017). As shown in Figure 1.

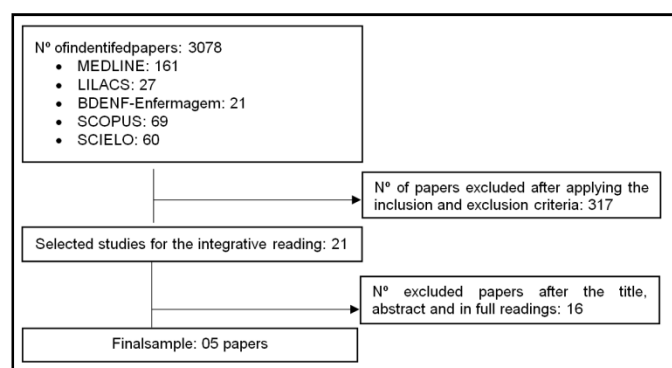


Figure 1. Selection process followed the recommendations of the PRISMA model. Fortaleza-CE, Brazil, 2018

For the organization and analysis of scientific productions, a semi-structured data collection instrument was used with items of: scientific production identification (reference, year of publication, place of study, level of evidence and target audience), objectives of the study, main nursing care strategies and their influence on Joyce Travelbee's Theory of Person-to-Person Relationship. For the evaluation of the level of evidence of the articles researched, the guidelines of Level of Scientific Evidence by Type of Study - "Oxford Center for Evidence-based Medicine" Alves *et al.* (2016) were used. Subsequently, an annotation was made of the studies and the categorization, elaborating a synthesis matrix, forming an individual library, starting the first phase of data content analysis. Finally, the articles were organized into tables and the analysis and interpretation of the findings were based on the relevant literature (Esperidião *et al.*, 2013).

## RESULTS

As results achieved, it was evidenced that the five scientific productions under analysis, contemplated different scenarios of nursing practice and promoted the insertion of the Theory of Travelbee. The year with the highest number of publications was 2015, with two articles published. Characterization of the articles identified: year of publication, place of study, level of evidence, target audience and study site, as presented in table 1. The publications highlight the applicability of the Travelbee Theory in the context of the work of the nurse in the field of Mental Health, pediatrics, Nursing management and urgency and emergency. A second predominant element in the publications is in the process of training nurses and the theoretical references adopted to work in the specialty of Psychiatric Nursing and Mental Health. It was sought to draw categories and parallels between the main components that based the objectives, results and main conclusions of the articles, as can be observed according to Table 2.

**Table 1. Characterization of the scientific productions as to the level of evidence, to the target public and place of study. Fortaleza, Ceará, 2018**

Cod	Author/Year	Levelofevidence	Target audience and place of study
A1	Rodrigues JS, Santos SMA, Spricigo JS (2012). Ensino do cuidado de Enfermagem em Saúde Mental através do discurso docente. <i>Texto &amp; Contexto - Enfermagem</i> , 21(3), 616-624.	VI	Nine professors from the four oldest Nursing courses in the State of Santa Catarina.
A2	Rocha TO, Faria SMS (2013). La comunicación enfermera-cliente en el cuidado en las unidades de urgencias 24h: una interpretación Travelbee. <i>Enfermería Global</i> , 12(30), 76-90.	VI	Ten nurses who worked directly with Nursing care at UPA 24h, located in the city of Belford Roxo-Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
A3	Lima DWC et al (2014). Referenciais teóricos que norteiam a prática de Enfermagem em Saúde Mental. <i>Escola Anna Nery</i> , 18(2), 336-342.	VI	14 nurses from the Psychosocial Care Centers of the city of Fortaleza-Ceará, Brazil.
A4	Bezerra RS et al (2015). O processo de Enfermagem e a teoria de Travelbee no cuidado à criança hospitalizada. <i>Revista Eletrônica Gestão &amp; Saúde</i> , 6(supl3), 2151-2161.	VII	Carried out a bibliographical survey and readings about the aspects of the Nursing process and assumptions of the theory of Travelbee.
A5	Navarro CL, et al. (2015). Satisfacción usuaria respecto a competencia de comunicación del profesional de enfermería. <i>Ciencia y enfermería</i> , 21(1), 91-102.	VI	151 people. The study was carried out in three public services in the Valparaíso region, Chile, in medium-complexity medical-surgical units.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

**Table 2. Synthesis of the objectives, results and conclusions of the studies, based on the Theory of Travelbee. Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, 2018**

Synthesis of objectives and results	Main conclusions of the studies
Interpersonal relationship and communication processes	A2 revealed that nurses perceive and conceptualize verbal and nonverbal communication as a key element not only to develop care in their technical aspects but also to promote the nurse-patient relationship. They demonstrate that the offer of words of comfort, tranquility and emotional support favor the feeling of confidence expressed in the Interactionist Theory and the formation of the nurse-patient bond. In the A5, the degree of satisfaction of the user in relation to the communication competence of the nursing professional was determined in the hospital context, using some quantitative instruments and the principles of Joyce Travelbee's theory, which reveals qualitative aspects in the quality of care. It was intended to contribute to hospital management and improve the practices of nursing professionals, giving them time to establish real communication with their patients.
The use of theory as a guiding practice of nursing care	The A3 shows that the theoretical references that guide the clinical practice of the nurse that acts in the attention in Mental Health can be categorized in reference of the theories of Nursing; biomedical reference; references that subsidize alternative practices; referential subsidized by the public policy of harm reduction; and referential of psychoanalytic theory. It was identified that there was not always a consistent theoretical appropriation, mainly of nursing theories, capable of allowing a coherent relationship between the referential mentioned and the production of care in Mental Health. The A4 showed that the association of the Nursing Process with the Travelbee Theory was important for the development of a human, scientific and technologically advanced Nursing care, respecting the child in its growth and development phase.
Teaching in mental health and the Theory of Person-to-Person Relationship	A1 reveals that teaching is not delivered as specific content, but is intrinsic and approached along other themes and content, emphasis was placed on psychopathologies and the role of nurses in psychosocial care services. The result shows that care as an integrative content for theory and practice is weakened because it is being taught without due relevance, since this is the epistemic object of Nursing.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Based on these findings and the in-depth critique of the selected publications, it was possible to generate two categories for a better discussion of the findings, the first one being: Travelbee's Theory and the mental health area; and the second: Travelbee's theory and specific Nursing contexts.

## DISCUSSION

**Travelbee's Theory and the mental health area:** There is a strong influence of the psychosocial field in the disciplines of Mental Health Nursing, in addition, the health systems and the specific curricular guidelines of each country and its regions, materialize epistemological bases and very diverse and specific care practices. However, one can perceive the transversal character that the Person-to-Person Relationship Theory performs in this process, in the different scenarios and realities in which it can be applied (Lima *et al.*, 2014). Authors analyzed how the teaching of Mental Health Nursing is being given through the teaching discourse. It was evidenced that teachers, of the three studied Nursing courses, use Joyce's Theory of Travelbee as guiding reference for the discipline. However, in the same research, it was possible to perceive the disparity in relation to other teachers, who stated that they did not use any specific referential, others based on guidelines of the country's health ministry, and others incorporate the biomedical benchmark in their practices (Rodrigues; Santos; Spricigo, 2012). The study Rocha and Faria (2013), developed at the Psychosocial Support Centers (CAPS) of the city of Fortaleza-Ceará sought to identify the theoretical references

that guide the clinical practice of Nursing in Mental Health, it was realized, therefore, that there was a difficulty of the nurses to define the theoretical references used. The Nursing theories cited were mainly the theorists Florence Nightingale, Dorethea Orem, Wanda Horta and Imogene King. It was discussed in the aforementioned study Rocha and Faria (2013) that there were limitations in the in-depth knowledge of the concepts of the theories, making superficial the approach and the contextualization with the psychic suffering, by the service nurses. It reinforces the need for the adoption of internationalist nursing theories, as seen by the theorists Hildegard Peplau and Joyce Travelbee. It becomes relevant to reflect on how it is to incorporate the Theory of Travelbee into undergraduate and graduate curricula. It is imperative that the nurses present mastery over their own discipline, giving it operationality in their professional practice, for this, the study of Nursing theories must be valued and its application must take place in the different contexts in which Nursing is inserted (McEwen and Wills 2016). With regard to these specific studies in the area of Mental Health Nursing, it was possible to perceive a concern of the researchers with the perspectives of the teachers and professionals in relation to their adopted references, allowing a regional panorama on how the Theory of Travelbee is being approached and other nursing theories, in the practice of nursing professionals.

**Travelbee's Theory and specific contexts of Nursing:** In composing the axis of the great theories, the applicability of the Theory of Travelbee can take place in diverse contexts and

situations of Nursing. The example given by other scholars Navarro *et al.*, (2015) about the Theory of Person-to-Person Relationship was the application of theory as a reference for analyzing the discourse of nurses in the Units of Emergency Care (UPA), is a way of perceiving its capillarity. The proposal to strengthen interpersonal relationships and the possibilities of developing a care beyond the instrumental, reaching expressive care, shows the importance of Person-to-Person Relationship Theory in improving nurse-patient communication. The subjective, sentimental and emotional demands, when gaining space in the Nursing clinic, provide an optimized information exchange, being the interactions, possibilities to create an effective communication channel within the accelerated routine of the emergency units (Navarro *et al.*, 2015). The person-to-person care in the pediatric context was reinforced by a study Bezerra *et al.*, (2015) developed by aiming the highlights of the importance of interactions with the child as a triggering factor for a humanized care. The authors also draw parallels between the phases of the person-to-person relationship with the Nursing Care Systematization (SAE), praising the possibility of satisfying the needs of the children. It was adopted the first publication of Travelbee, being an outdated version of its theory. The potentialities seen in the effectiveness of the nurses' communication process with their client can be considered a management tool in Nursing. For other authors Navarro *et al.*, (2015), in the context of Chile, these potentialities may have a perspective of movement of quality management and hospital accreditation. Providing a singular care, contemplating the intersubjectivity and its meanings, established in the work of Travelbee, can enable to the Nursing professional a place of prominence in the indicators of quality of attention. Still, according to these authors Navarro *et al.*, (2015), it was possible to perceive that the satisfaction indexes of the users in relation to the nurses oscillated statistically between 71 to 100%, in the three institutions studied. It was observed, therefore, that the longer the hospitalization time, the better evaluated were the nurses, and could be attributed to a greater opportunity to establish interactions, in addition with non-verbal communication, was investigated and was pointed out with one of the primordial factors for the effective establishment of the link.

## Conclusion

By systematizing references about the current panorama of the scientific literature based on Joyce Travelbee Theory, it was possible to verify the importance and the presence that this reference still has in scientific journals, even though decades have passed since the last publication of the theory. It was possible to perceive that there is a strong capillarity of the theory of the person-to-person relationship in the most varied scenarios and contexts in which Nursing is inserted, from Mental Health, Pediatrics, Nursing Management and Urgency and Emergency Units, demonstrating its breadth and capillarity. It is important to point out that one of the biases of the study was the scarcity of publications, reflected in a small sample of papers, directly affecting the quality of the results and the discussions. Therefore, one point is the promotion of the adoption of the Travelbee referential in the academic and professional environments in which the Nursing discipline is worked. As an implication for nursing practice, it is concluded

that the use of the Person-to-Person Relationship Theory allows a better delineation and orientation of Nursing practice. When working exclusively by adopting referentials from other disciplines of knowledge, the opportunity to improve and document the inherent potentialities of Nursing situations is lost, hindering the progress of nurses' specific knowledge. With regard to the specialty in Mental Health, it is important to prioritize theories that support the subject's clinic, valuing its intersubjectivity, singularity, learning with experiences and non-linearity of phenomena, this can be looked on within the Theory of the Relationship Person to Person.

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