

Publish or Perish? Why Not Disseminate—and Protect Our Nursing Workforce

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In nursing, the phrase “publish or perish” is often used to describe the pressure to produce scholarly work, secure funding, publish manuscripts, and demonstrate productivity. While scholarship remains essential to advancing nursing education and practice, this narrow framing can unintentionally contribute to burnout, particularly for nurses juggling multiple roles as clinicians, educators, leaders, or scholars. A broader and more sustainable mindset asks a different question: *Why not disseminate?*

Dissemination is the intentional sharing of nursing work, research, quality improvement, education initiatives, or innovations, with those who can use it. When approached thoughtfully, dissemination not only extends the impact of nursing work but also supports professional meaning, engagement, and well-being. Viewed through the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, dissemination can function as a valuable job resource that helps buffer the effects of high workload,

role overload, and competing demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Reframing dissemination as an ongoing, values-driven activity, rather than a final obligation, can help mitigate burnout by reconnecting nurses with the purpose behind their work.

Burnout is often fueled by the sense that one’s efforts are invisible or undervalued, a concern well documented among nurse faculty and academic leaders (Thomas et al., 2019). Dissemination directly counters these drivers. Sharing outcomes with colleagues, students, community partners, or professional organizations affirms that the work matters. Seeing how an idea influences practice, education, or policy can restore a sense of accomplishment, an important antidote to emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Laurencelle et al., 2016).

Importantly, dissemination does not have to mean writing one more manuscript late at night. While peer-reviewed publication remains important, dissemi-

nation can take many accessible forms, including brief presentations at staff meetings, posters at professional conferences, executive summaries for leadership, infographics for community partners, or short practice briefs for newsletters. Dissemination and implementation science emphasizes that tailoring messages to specific audiences increases relevance and real-world impact (Brownson et al., 2023; Tabak et al., 2012).

For nurses involved in grant-funded or organizational projects, dissemination is also a professional responsibility. Funding agencies increasingly expect transparency and accountability through presentations, reports, and shared products (Wilson et al., 2010; Costner-Lark et al., 2025). Planning dissemination early, and aligning it with everyday work such as teaching, mentoring, or clinical leadership, reduces last-minute pressure and supports healthier work patterns.

Most importantly, dissemination reminds nurses that they are not simply producing tasks or meeting metrics. They are contributing to collective learning, strengthening the profession, and advancing patient care. When dissemination highlights impact rather than output alone, it becomes a strategy for sustainability, not strain.

Instead of choosing between publishing or perishing, nursing can embrace dissemination as a professional practice that honors both impact and well-being. Sharing our work is not just about advancing careers, it is about sustaining ourselves and protecting the future of nursing. ■

References online:
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