

Nursing Leadership and Research Infrastructure in a University Hospital Setting: An Updated 2019-2025 Analysis of the DAIRI-AOU AL Model

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Introduction. The increasing complexity of healthcare systems requires integrated models combining clinical practice, research, and innovation. Nursing leadership is essential for promoting evidence-based practice and generating value for patients, healthcare professionals, and organizations. This study aimed to describe and critically evaluate the organizational model and activities of the Health Professions Research Unit within DAIRI, highlighting its role in strengthening research capacity and promoting innovation in clinical practice.

Methods. A descriptive organizational analysis of a hospital-wide research network was conducted. The model comprises a Director of Health Professions Research, three organization-level research coordinators, and three area-based coordinators covering rehabilitation, medical-surgical, and technical areas. These roles are divided equally between the Research Unit and clinical settings to ensure operational integration. The network is complemented by research nurses and study nurses working across hospital departments and supporting protocol development, study implementation, and data collection. Organizational activities and scientific outputs produced between 2019 and 2025 were analyzed.

Results. The Health Professions Research Unit implemented a structured, multilevel research network. Approximately 150 studies were conducted across cardiorespiratory, neurological, oncological, and self-care research areas. The network supported protocol development, study management, and data monitoring. Between 2019 and 2025, scientific productivity increased and national and international collaborations expanded, facilitating multicenter studies and knowledge translation activities with organizational impact.

Discussion. This experience suggests that structured research networks, nursing leadership, and dedicated organizational infrastructures can strengthen research capacity and facilitate knowledge translation into clinical practice. The DAIRI-AOU AL model may represent a scalable and sustainable framework for supporting health professions research in other healthcare organizations.

Keywords: Nursing Leadership, Nursing Research, Evidence-Based Practice, Organizational Innovation, Health Professions, Research Infrastructure

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