AACN statement on the practice of Doctorate in nursing:

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) was established and adopted in 2004 by the American Association of the College of Nursing (AACN). In 2004, the AACN published a public document that mentioned the need for the practice of the doctorate in nursing and formally recognized the advanced practice nurses and the DNPs by advocating and providing opportunities through which more graduate-level nurses can pursue the doctorate program. The role of DNPs in the healthcare sector has emerging roles, even though the degree comes with various pros and cons of doctoral preparation for advanced practice nurses.

Pros of doctoral preparation for advanced practice nurses:

The DNPs are in high demand due to their knowledge and expertise, which will improve patient care, help in managing complex patient situations, and ensure the safety of the patient. There is an ongoing shortage of clinically approved nurses, which increases the demand for a higher level of DNPs who can implement ideas and provide better patient care. The DNP is the highest level of education for nurses, which increases the monetary value of the nurse. The DNPs play an important role in leadership and management, and they can participate in policy-making in their organization, which will implement the needs of future nurses. Simply put, they can influence a change in their organization or the national or state-level policies. The main advantage of being a DNP is access to a broader range of job opportunities. The doctoral degree will provide in-depth knowledge and initiate the practice of evidence-based studies. This will provide various opportunities for research and networking, contributing to advanced nursing practice.

Cons of doctoral preparation for advanced practice nurses:

The top con for most individuals thinking of pursuing the DNP degree is that it is a lengthy educational path. It requires a significant time investment that will potentially impact the personal life of an individual. The DNP program is expensive, and there are nurses with a BSN degree who cannot pursue the DNP due to the economy. Financial debt is a common problem in DNPs who take a financial loan to pursue their studies, as the DNP program costs a lot. The DNP program mainly focuses on leadership, management, interprofessional relationships, evidence-based practice, and other organizational skills, it does not provide any new hands-on skills for the nurses (Schlette, 2025).

Contribution of the DNP-prepared nurses in Education:

In the realm of education, DNP-prepared nurses serve as nursing educators, and mentors, and take part in quality improvement projects. They teach evidence-based nursing skills and practice to the future generation of nurses. They play an important role in the implementation of research into practice, the improvement of patient care, and emphasizing systematic changes in the healthcare sector. They design and implement community programs and seminars through which the future generation of nurses can increase their network and improve their skills and knowledge. They will help the nursing students in building interstate connections and provide them with opportunities to practice widely in different states and areas. They can promote innovation by influencing systematic changes in the healthcare system that will lead to improved quality of care and healthcare outcomes.

Contribution of the DNP-prepared nurses in Administration:

They utilize their leadership and management skills in healthcare administration by improving patient care, influencing a change in healthcare policy, and emphasizing quality improvement initiatives. They initiate interdisciplinary collaborations, lead teams, and ensure shared goals. Their ability in strategic planning and thinking guides the healthcare organization by addressing and adapting to changes and identifying opportunities to grow. They manage the healthcare delivery systems and lead the nursing department. They advocate for policies that will implement public health, promote patient care, and reduce health disparities.

Contribution of the DNP-prepared nurses in Clinicians:

The DNP-prepared nurses work and directly communicate with the patients in the role of NPs, CRNAs, CNSs, and CNMs. This allows them to manage complex situations, evaluate treatment plans, diagnose, and the developing of individualized patient care plans. They implement patient care strategies by taking part in policy making, innovative ideas to initiate care models, and addressing gaps in the healthcare system. They conduct research-based studies that help in the implementation of healthcare policies and create innovative ideas that will improve patient care outcomes (Beeber et al., 2019).

The statement of the AACN on the practice of the doctorate in nursing (DNP) has a significant impact on nursing education and practice. The recognition and support of AACN for advanced practice nurses in pursuing a doctoral level of education is crucial for the nurses to practice, gain skills, and implement evidence-based studies. In the DNP program, the nurses mainly gain skills in the management of an organization, leadership skills, advocating for policy, and implementing those in patient care, resulting in better outcomes in the healthcare system.

References:

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