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THREE GENERATIONS OF NURSES – FROM PRACTICE TO THEORY AND RESEARCH IN A 99 YEAR PERSPECTIVE

In 1848 Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) started nursing education, in London. The first education, in Sweden, for women in care started for church welfare workers in Ersta in 1851, by Marie Cederschiöld. The education in Kaiserswerth, Germany, was the model (where also Nightingale had been educated). From Sweden, Emmy Carolina Rappe visited the Nightingale School in 1866 and the year after she started the first secular nursing education in Uppsala, and in Stockholm (The Red Cross Nursing School). Significant developments in the advance of Swedish nursing came when Queen Sophia (1836-1913) founded the Sophiahemmet School in 1884, in Stockholm. Its first principal was Alfhild Ehrenborg, who obtained some of her training at the Nightingale School.

In year 1624 the Danish King Christian IV (1577-1648) build a hospital in my home city Kristianstad, in the south part of Sweden (belonged to Denmark -1332 and 1360-1658). Nursing education started in 1893 in Kristianstad (one of the first ten nursing schools in Sweden). The education was mainly based on practice, and from 1908 theoretical education was introduced. Its first principal was Sigrid Lothigius, and she had her education from the Red Cross Nursing School in Stockholm.

My own family nursing history begins with my grandmother Hanna Åkesdotter (1890-1955) who studied in Kristianstad (1910-1911, 1 ½ years education), a great focus was on practical training. She worked as a municipality nurse (1911-1921) until marriage. My mother, Ingegård Nilsson (1922-1988) studied in Jönköping (1946-1949, 3 ½ years education), and it was both theoretical as well as practical training. She worked as a paediatric nurse, school nurse, district nurse, and as a director for primary health care. During her last years she got an increasing interest for “the new field” of nursing research (during the 1980s). I myself, Albert Westergren (born 1967) became the third generation of nurses and graduated in Kristianstad in 1989 after 2 years education. The education had a 50/50 balance between theory and practice, and research was introduced during the education. In 1993 I studied one more year in order to get a bachelor of science, and became Ph.D in 2001. It took 99 years from that my grandmother began her nursing education till that I became a professor in year 2009. Today, I am a chair professor at the Kristianstad University, School of Health and Society. The students get both a practical degree (Registered Nurse) as well as an academic degree (Bachelor of Science).

Theme: Nursing in Modern Times