



EAHN

EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION
FOR THE HISTORY
OF NURSING

Editorial

completed by Karen Nolte



Figure: Radiology nurse in the medical clinic
– Ludolf Krehl Clinic – at the university around 1900

Dear colleagues,

another year full of everyday and political challenges is coming to an end.

I look back with joy on our meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in February 2025 and look forward to our next gathering in Zagreb, Croatia, on February 6, 2026!

Until then, I wish all EAHN members a good start to the new year 2026 and health, success, and many wonderful experiences for the new year!

Best regards

Belgium – The Belgian Association for the History of Nursing

by *Luc de Munck*

Belgian laureate of the Florence Nightingale Medal

The Belgian association spent a great deal of time preparing a nomination for the Florence Nightingale Medal of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the highest international award for nurses. Our member Professor Walter Sermeus was nominated as the Belgian candidate. He has conducted innovative research into the recording of nursing data. On 12 May, the ICRC in Geneva confirmed that Walter Sermeus was one of the 35 laureates of this “Nobel Prize for Nursing”. Thanks to the efforts of our association, after 58 years a Belgian nurse has once again been awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal. This was presented to the laureate on 8 October 2025 during a ceremony at the office of the ICRC in Brussels. On that occasion, the president of the Belgian association gave the laudatory speech. He also wrote an article about the history of the prize for a blog of the University of Leuven

[\(https://cultuurgeschiedenis.be/nobelprijs-verpleegkunde-voor-leuvense-hoogleraar/\)](https://cultuurgeschiedenis.be/nobelprijs-verpleegkunde-voor-leuvense-hoogleraar/).



Figure 1: Presentation of the Florence Nightingale Medal to Walter Sermeus (in the middle)

Master’s thesis on the history of the Nursing Week

The president of our association supervised a master’s thesis on the history of the Nursing Week, which has been organized since 1975 by the largest and most important professional organization for nurses in Belgium (of which our association is a working group). This week has three objectives: knowledge sharing (in 2025, there were 17 specialist study days on the program), group formation (in 2025, there were 2,452 physical and 1,350 digital participants) and increasing the social visibility and recognition of nurses. Based on research in the extensive archive of the week and interviews with a number of speakers, participants and organizers, the thesis paints an excellent picture of the importance of the week as a platform on which nurses could develop and express their professional identity. In this sense, this study makes an important contribution to the history of nursing in Belgium.

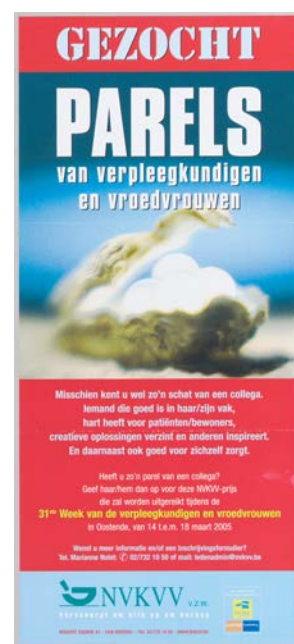


Figure 2: Since 2005, “Pearls” have been awarded to nurses during the Nursing Week in recognition of motivated nurses

Focus on the history of nursing in nursing schools

On 27 February 2026, the author of the thesis on the history of the Nursing Week will give a lecture at the invitation of our association, during which she will present the results of her study in detail. This will take place during the association's annual meeting, which will also be held on that day. The main focus of that meeting will be on how the history of nursing can be incorporated into the curriculum of nursing schools. Two concrete examples, developed by two members and lecturers at nursing schools, will form the basis of the discussion.

Exhibitions in Brussels and Antwerp

At the request of the professional organization for nurses, the president of our association developed an exhibition on the history of the organization since 1924. The panels of this exhibition will be on permanent display from early 2026 in the House of Nurses in Brussels, the headquarters of the professional organization.

A member of our association was curator of the exhibition “Caritas and Ars Medica”, organized by the Lambotte Museum for the History of Healthcare. This exhibition takes place from 1 October 2025 to 15 August 2026 in the Parish

Hall of the Cathedral in Antwerp. In particular, it focuses on the religious nurses who for centuries took care of patients in charitable institutions in Antwerp. This is illustrated in the exhibition by, among other things, the famous painting by Jacob Jordaens depicting the Sisters of Charity in Antwerp at the beginning of the 17th century. It depicts “The Seven Works of Mercy” and shows the sisters of the St. Elisabeth Hospital during the plague epidemic in Antwerp.



Figure 3: Painting of Jacob Jordaens “The Seven Works of Mercy”

Croatia – Nursing Croatian Nurses Association (CNA). Society for the History of Nursing

by *Božica Jurinec*

The Society for the History of Nursing of the Croatian Nurses Association continued its activities in 2025 with a focus on research and the promotion of nursing history. Particular emphasis was placed on the popularisation of nursing history through contemporary communication channels. The Society for the History of Nursing participated in the organisation of the national event *Night of the Book*, traditionally organised by the Library of the School of Public Health [1, 2, 3, 4].



This year's *Night of the Book* was held on 23 April 2025 at the Library of the School of Public Health "Andrija Štampar" under the title *Between Science and Dedication: Stories from the History of Health Care* [5].



As part of the event, members of the Society for the History of Nursing presented *The Historical Development of Nursing in Croatia* and, in cooperation with the Bedekovčina Secondary School, presented short biographies of nurses from the first and second halves of the 20th century, as well as the multimedia presentation *Nursing in Images and Sound*.



In addition, members of the Society prepared the exhibition *Heritage and Dedication to the Service of Health*, further highlighting the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the history of nursing in the territory of the Republic of Croatia. Furthermore, the Society for the History

of Nursing maintains a continuous active presence on the social network Facebook, where information related to nursing history, significant events and prominent individuals is regularly published. Special attention is given to posts marking the birthdays of nurses who made a lasting contribution to the development of nursing, thereby fostering a culture of remembrance and valuing the historical role of nurses. Through systematic digital communication, the Society for the History of Nursing of the Croatian Nurses Association continues to actively contribute to the preservation and promotion of national and European nursing history.

References

1. Franković, S. & Abou Aldan, D. (2019). Noć knjige; Škola narodnog zdravlja „Andrija Štampar“, 23. travnja 2019. *Sestrinski glasnik*, 24, 113–115.
2. Franković, S. & Jurinec, B. (2015). Obilježavanje Noći knjige 2015. godine – Škola narodnog zdravlja „Andrija Štampar“. *Sestrinski glasnik*, 20(3), 281–282.
3. Franković, S., Jurinec, B. & Vinduška, I. (2015). Obilježavanje Noći knjige 2015. godine – Škola narodnog zdravlja „Andrija Štampar“. *Sestrinski glasnik*, 20(3), 281–282.
4. Vinduška, I. & Jurinec, B. (2014). Noć knjige u Školi narodnog zdravlja „Andrija Štampar“. *Sestrinski glasnik*, 19(2), 145–147.
5. Machala Poplašen, L. (2025). Noć knjige 2025. u Knjižnici „Andrija Štampar“: Između znanosti i predanosti – priče iz povijesti zdravstva. *List Medicinskog fakulteta*, 44 (1). Sveučilište u Zagrebu, Medicinski fakultet.

Germany – German Association for the History of Nursing (GAHN)

by Karen Nolte

In May 2025, the textbook on the history of nursing was published, written in German by members of GAHN in collaboration with other experts in the field for teaching in nursing schools.



Figure 1: Textbook on the History of Nursing, published in May 2025

While working on the textbook, we realized how many gaps there still are in the historiography of nursing in the GDR. In addition, 36 years have already passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the contemporary witnesses, who were already older adults in 1989, are now also at an advanced age. The dimension of experience during the period of systemic change and structural upheaval can only be researched through interviews with contemporary witnesses using the so-called “oral history” method. How was the period before and after 1989 perceived by nursing professionals who had been trained in the GDR and who had worked in the GDR healthcare system? And what topics and questions would be important to contemporary witnesses from the nursing profession in the GDR in a research project?

This year, GAHN met in Chemnitz, Germany, for a workshop on the history of nursing in the GDR: Andreas Walter, who founded a medical and nursing history collection

at Chemnitz Hospital 25 years ago, first recounted the history of the collection and then talked about how he became a nurse in the GDR and how he experienced the transition from the GDR to a unified Germany.



Figure 2: Andreas Walter

Fruzsina Müller presented the results of her research project “Nursing in the conflict between religion and politics using the example of the Deaconess House in Leipzig,” on which she has published a book. Finally, Christoph Schwamm spoke about “Professional role models in pediatric nursing in the GDR.”



Figure 3: Christoph Schwamm

On the second day, a workshop with contemporary witnesses took place. It was attended by nursing professionals from pediatric nursing, endoscopy nursing, surgical nursing, and the former administrative director of Chemnitz Hospital, who had also previously trained as a nurse.

Israel – The Israeli Society for the History of Nursing (ISHN)

by Hava Golander & Nira Bartal

In 2025, the Israeli Society for the History of Nursing (ISHN) focused on completing its major scholarly project: the manuscript for *One Hundred Years of Nursing in Israel: History, Profession, and Clinical Practice*. This edited volume includes 16 chapters documenting the unique development of nursing in Israel and is supported by grants from two prestigious institutions, including the National Institute for Health Services Research and Health Policy.

Preserving nursing heritage remains a core mission of ISHN. This year, we continued receiving valuable historical materials and assisted the Israeli Film Archive in preparing a collection of films, textual, and visual documentation about the history of nursing in Israel.

Our twelfth annual conference, titled *Mental Health in Israel Through the Lens of History: Challenges, Services, and Treatment Methods*, was held on September 8, 2025, at Tel Aviv University's Department of Nursing, in collaboration with the Israeli Psychiatric Nursing Association. Approximately sixty participants attended.



Figure 1: Conference: *Mental Health in Israel Through the Lens of History: Challenges, Services, and Treatment Methods*

An elaborated digital abstract book was sent to all participants and ISHN members following the conference.

EAHN Bulletin 15/2025

Opening remarks were delivered by Prof. Michal Itzhaki (Head of the Department of Nursing, Tel Aviv University), Ms. Galit Levi (Chair of the Israeli Psychiatric Nursing Association), and Prof. Hava Golander (Chair of ISHN).

The first session focused on historical milestones in mental health services:

- Dr. Nira Bartal presented the history of the “Ezrat Nashim” (“Women’s Help”) association (1895–1918), a charitable institution initiated by two volunteer women in Jerusalem.
- Dr. Osnat Gelbart discussed the establishment of private and public mental health institutions during the British Mandate (1918–1948).
- Ms. Peni Behrbalk examined therapeutic encounters with 100 mentally ill Holocaust survivors who arrived in Israel in 1952.
- Ms. Hava Gueta analyzed three major reforms in mental health between 1995–2015 --structural, rehabilitative, and insurance -- and their impact on the nursing system.
- Ms. Galit Levi reviewed the history of the Israeli Psychiatric Nursing Association since 1990, highlighting its mission to improve care and elevate the status of psychiatric nurses.

The keynote lecture was delivered by Prof. Avi Ohry, former director of a rehabilitation center and professor at Tel Aviv University's School of Medicine. Drawing on his personal experience as a prisoner of war in Egypt during the 1973 war, Prof. Ohry described the long-term effects of trauma and his pioneering work in post-traumatic care. Motivated by his own symptoms and recovery journey, he became a leading researcher and advocate, founding voluntary organizations and contributing to national and in-

ternational committees. Many of his recommendations have been implemented in the care of hostages since October 7, 2023, war.

Ms. Yael Dror, a retired ICU nurse, shared her two years of volunteer work supporting the families of the 48 living and deceased Israeli hostages in Gaza, serving as their health-promoting nurse around the clock.

ISHN awarded certificates of appreciation to Prof. Abraham Ohry, Ms. Peni Behrbalk, and Ms. Nima Amit for their contributions to nursing and nursing heritage preservation.

A panel moderated by Dr. Dorit Weiss featured Ms. Peni Behrbalk, Mr. Muhammad Abushah, Ms. Revital Ordan, and Dr. Tmira Hefetz—prominent figures in psychiatric nursing past and present. They reflected on the evolving role of psychiatric nurses and outlined future directions for the profession.

Publications

- Shvarts S. (2025). *Ringworm: The Forgotten Epidemic, The Israeli Story 1925–1995*. Yad Ben Zvi Press, Jerusalem (Hebrew).
- Weiss D., Shvarts S. (2024). “Policy, Medicine, and Health Challenges during the Great Immigration to Israel in the 1950s.” In M. Inbari (Ed.), *The Yemenite Children Affair*. Lexington Books, USA.

- Weiss D., Dolev E. (2024). “A Historic View of Ethics and Public Health in a Crisis.” *Journal of Culture and Democracy*, Bar Ilan University, Special Issue 22, pp. 13–34 (Hebrew).
- Weiss D. (2025). “The Immigrant Medical Services Organization during the End of the British Mandate and the First Years of Israel (1944–1953).” *Rambam Maimonides Medical Journal*, 16(1), pp. 1–13.

Conference Participation

- Weiss D. “Healthcare in the Cyprus Detention Camps – Policy, Mission and Health.” 19th World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 2025 (Hebrew).
- Weiss D. “From the Netanyahu Committee (1988) to the Gamzu Committee (2022).” Poster presented at the 17th Annual Conference of the Israel National Institute for Health Policy Research, Tel Aviv, September 2025 (Hebrew).

Segev R. “Navigating Crisis: The Role of Local and Foreign Nurses in World War I Palestine.” 42nd Annual Nursing and Health Care History Conference, Wilmington, NC, USA, October 16–18, 2025.



Figure 2: Certificates of Appreciation to Prof. Abraham Ohry, Ms. Peni Behrbalk, and Ms. Nima Amit

Italy – Italian Nurses’ Association with a Nursing History Group, CNAI (Consociazione nazionale delle Associazioni infermiere/i)

by Paola Arcadi

Nursing Identity Today: Legacy and Future Pathways in the Wake of Marisa Cantarelli

On 18 June 2025, the city of Milan hosted the seminar “Nursing Identity Today: Legacy and Future Pathways in the Wake of Marisa Cantarelli”, promoted by the Academy of Nursing Sciences (Accademia Scienze Infermieristiche - ASI), with the participation of Walter De Caro, President of the Italian Nurses Association (Consociazione nazionale delle Associazioni infermiere/i – CNAI). The initiative aimed to honour and bring into contemporary focus the intellectual and professional legacy of Marisa Cantarelli, just months after her passing, by exploring the enduring theoretical, historical, and political relevance of her work within today’s nursing profession.

scientific output and conceptual contributions remain essential reference points. As Paola Arcadi, President of ASI, recalled in her opening address:

“Today, in a time when many colleagues feel disoriented, weary, ambivalent about calling themselves nurses, we have gathered here, in your wake, to ask ourselves once again what it means to be one.”

The seminar unfolded through four thematic sessions addressing key areas of action in Cantarelli’s legacy: education, research, management, and professional culture. The day opened with institutional greetings from Barbara Mangiacavalli, President of the Italian National Federation of Nursing Orders (Federazione Nazionale degli Ordini delle Professioni Infermieristiche – FNOPI), who reminded the audience that “we cannot build a solid future without deep roots,” and concluded with a reflective synthesis by Edoardo Manzoni, nurse and philosopher.

The poster is a vertical rectangular graphic with a blue and white color scheme. At the top left is the logo of the Italian Nurses Association (CNAI). Below it, text reads 'in collaborazione con Municipio 3 comune di Milano'. The main title is 'L'IDENTITÀ Infermieristica oggi: Eredità e Prospettive nel Solco di Marisa CANTARELLI'. To the right, a 'COMITATO' section lists names: Enza Anemollo, Paola Arcadi, Debora Bissani, Loris Bonetti, Cinzia Botter, Laura Camilleri, Antonella Demm. Below that, a 'PARTECIPAZIONE' section says 'La partecipazione è gratuita'. At the bottom, an 'ISCRIZIONE' section provides a URL 'https://fopi.it' and a 'SEGRETERIA' section lists 'FNOPI Milano Lodi'. The central image shows an elderly woman in a dark coat and a younger man in a light blue uniform walking away from the viewer, holding hands. The date '18 GIUGNO 2025' is prominently displayed on the left. The location 'Auditorium S. Cerri, Municipio 3, Via Valvassori Peroni 56, Milano' is at the bottom.



A foundational figure in Italian nursing, and the first theorist of nursing care in the country, Cantarelli significantly shaped the development of nursing as a discipline, influencing education, research, and managerial practice. Her

Cantarelli’s writings, speeches, and interviews provided the guiding thread for the entire day: each session began with an excerpt from her work, offering inspiration for inter-

generational, interdisciplinary, and interprofessional dialogue.

The session “Building Professional Identity: Education as a Foundation”, led by Alessia Sorrenti and Nicole Vela, with contributions from Paolo Motta, Maura Lusignani, Beatrice Mazzoleni, and Duilio Manara, explored the formative power of nursing education as the birthplace of identity. Drawing from Cantarelli’s belief that “education is not merely the transmission of skills, but the construction of identity,” the discussion stressed the urgent need to train professionals deeply rooted in the discipline, capable of integrating knowledge, critical thinking, and humanity in response to the drift toward technicism.

The second session, “Research in Nursing: Perspectives on Disciplinary Inquiry”, moderated by Matteo Martinato and Loris Bonetti, featured Ercole Vellone, Angela Durante, Alessandro Galazzi, and Stefano Terzoni. Reflecting Cantarelli’s conviction that “it’s not enough to say what a nurse does; we must know why,” the session reaffirmed the urgency of truly disciplinary nursing research, grounded in the observation of care phenomena.

The session “Leadership and Identity: The Role of Management”, led by Claudio Maliziola and Miriam Villani, with Antonella Demarchi, Vianella Agostinelli, Giorgio Magon, and Bruno Cavaliere, examined how managerial choices shape professional identity. Echoing Cantarelli’s persistent questioning, “I always asked myself: why do we follow organizational needs instead of the person’s needs?”, the discussion emphasized the need for organizational models centred on care rather than productivity, models capable of supporting a profession grounded in ethical and epistemological coherence.

The final session, “Culture and Professional Development: Identity in Evolution”, moderated by Cinzia Botter and Barbara Sappa, brought together the presidents of the Italian Association for the Study of Skin Lesions (Associazione Infermieristica per lo Studio delle Lesioni Cutanee – AISLEC), the Italian National Association of Critical Care Nurses (Associazione Nazionale Infermieri di Area Critica – ANIARTI), CNAI, the American Holistic Nurses Association - Italian Section (AHNA), the Italian National Association of Neuroscience Nurses (Associazione Nazionale Infermieri Neuroscienze – ANIN), and ASI explored the role of scientific societies in shaping the future of the profession. Guided by Cantarelli’s collaborative spirit “battles aren’t won alone, I have always sought the group,” the dialogue addressed the political value of nursing, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, and the cultural leadership.

In his closing remarks, Edoardo Manzoni recalled one of Cantarelli’s earliest teachings, received from her mentor Anna Platter: “A few nurses, but with strong identity, can make the difference.”

Guided by the idea of care that safeguards, to borrow Heidegger’s words so dear to Cantarelli, the event succeeded in weaving together memory and vision, roots and new beginnings.

As Paola Arcadi concluded: “Identity is not inherited. It must be accompanied into being.”

This is the challenge that the Italian nursing community now carries forward: to build reflective, educational, clinical, and cultural spaces that restore meaning and direction to the profession, remaining faithful to the living legacy of Marisa Cantarelli while staying open to the demands of a time that calls for thought, responsibility, and vision.

The Netherlands – Dutch Museum for the History of Nursing FNI

by *Hugo Schalkwijk*

The Dutch Museum for Nursing (formerly the Florence Nightingale Institute) is an online museum and part of the Dutch Nurse Association (V&VN). This year, alongside curator Hugo Schalkwijk, we welcomed two new colleagues: Jitske Hell and Anna van Velzen, who both joined as junior curators and further strengthened the museum.

For the Museum for Nursing, 2025 was defined by a change of name, website, and visual identity. Our new name explicitly embraces the ICOM museum definition: an inclusive institution supported by its community. Our main platform, the website, was fully renewed. It now meets contemporary standards and features a clean, fresh design. This year, we published two major online exhibitions: one on the history of tuberculosis care, and one on nurse Aagje Monster, telling the story of an “ordinary” nurse during and shortly after the Second World War.

We also increasingly invested in collaborations with museums and other heritage institutions. We believe the history of nursing is embedded in many national narratives, as nurses operate at the heart of society. In collaboration with Erasmus MC (Rotterdam), we organized the exhibition *Ken u even komen* (“Can you please come over”) on 150 years of district nursing, alongside a mini-exhibition in Central Museum (Utrecht) of works by Dick Bruna, best known as the creator of Miffy, which he made about district nursing. The story of nursing pioneer Jeannette Kok was included in *750 Stories of Amsterdam*, an exhibition hosted by the city of Amsterdam in honor of its 750th anniversary.



Figure 1: Jeannette Kok

Alongside exhibitions, we organized lectures and symposia across the country. In total, we delivered 15 lectures and guest classes, spoke at five conferences, and organized two symposia. One of these was our own symposium, held at the Netherlands Open Air Museum, where the new website was officially launched.



Figure 2: Symposium, held at the Netherlands Open Air Museum

Since last year, we have collaborated with Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, Erasmus MC, Kinderdorp Neerbosch, and the Museum of the Mind on research into the value of care heritage. The first results were presented in September at Rijksmuseum Boerhaave. These insights will help us refine our strategies for collecting, preserving, and presenting

care heritage, and strengthen the value of our collection for our community.

Research into our collection also led to several new publications. A special historical edition of *Tijdschrift voor Ziekenverpleging* (TvZ), a professional journal for nurses published since 1890, appeared in celebration of its 135th anniversary. The issue features articles on scarcity, colonialism, and nursing science. Researcher Mia Vrijens completed her study on the history of district nursing and published multiple articles on this subject.



In the coming year, we will focus on two new projects: an exhibition on district nursing at the Utrecht Volksbuurtmuseum and the development of a traveling exhibition on long-term care. We will also intensify our collaboration with the Stichting Historisch Verpleegkundig Bezit (SHVB) by supporting the digitization and registration of their collection. Finally, we are looking forward to the start of the first Dutch research group dedicated to the history of nursing at Fontys University of Applied Sciences. The research group is called Nursing Through Time and headed by professor Pieterbas Lalleman.

Our field continues to evolve. We are relevant, and we make a difference!

Poland – Central Historical Commission in Cooperation with The Main Board of Polish Nurses Association

by Krystyna Wolska-Lipiec, Małgorzata Marcysiak

The Barbara Purtak Central Archives of Polish Nursing and the Museum of the History of Nursing and Midwifery constitute an important place not only for the history of nursing, but also as a source of inspiration for contemporary nurses in the development of the profession.

In 2025, the Main Historical Commission at the Main Board of the Polish Nurses' Association consisted of 15 active members, 5 supporting members and 1 honorary member (consultant).

Throughout 2025, work on the further digitization of museum collections continued. The Central Archives of Polish Nursing participated in the project "Permanent: Project for Safeguarding Social Collections" organised by the Centre for Social Archiving. As part of the project, training sessions, study visits and a conservation consultation were carried out, and materials for the long-term storage of collections were obtained.

Valuable archival materials were digitized, processed, secured and made available online. Among them was an album from the collection of Jadwiga Romanowska, Director of the Warsaw School of Nursing from 1936 to 1944, donated to the archives by her family. The album consists of 100 pages and contains invaluable photographic material documenting the activities of the school during the period of Nazi occupation. It also includes unique photographs of Warsaw from August 1939, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War. In total, the album comprises 506 items, including 453 photographs, 47 original poems and rhymed texts, and 6 other materials such as documents, letters and drawings.

Another digitized document was the Chronicle of the Polish Nurses' Association Branch in Chorzów, consisting of 63 pages. It documents a cruise aboard the ship "Kiliński" from Warsaw to Gdańsk, organised by the Chorzów Branch of the Polish Nurses' Association in cooperation with the Society of Friends of Fine Arts in Ka-

twice, which took place from 17 to 24 May 1959. The chronicle is a unique artefact due to its aesthetic qualities, including handwritten calligraphy and drawings. The report contained in the chronicle describes historical monuments in the cities visited.

The Main Historical Commission systematically acquires documents originating from the private collections of nurses, thereby expanding and enriching the archival resources.

On 12 May 2025, the Chair of the Main Historical Commission, Krystyna Wolska-Lipiec, was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal. This highest distinction, granted by the International Committee of the Red Cross, recognises outstanding contributions to the development of nursing, education and the preservation of the historical heritage of the profession. The award ceremony took place on 8 October 2025 in Warsaw and constituted a great honour for Polish nursing.



Figure 1: Krystyna Wolska-Lipiec receives the Florence Nightingale Medal

On 17 May 2025, the Museum of the History of Nursing and Midwifery once again participated in the annual Night of Museums event. Exhibitions devoted to the Warsaw

School of Nursing and the history of midwifery were presented. Temporary exhibitions were linked to the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Polish Association of Professional Nurses and its admission to the International Council of Nurses. In addition, paintings and poetry created by nurses were presented.



Figure 2: Members of the Commission in historical costumes

The event was accompanied by the scientific and training conference “Professional Nursing in Poland – Beginnings and Development”. The conference addressed the origins of nursing as a profession, nurse education in Poland during the interwar and post-war periods, contemporary directions of education, the development of nursing organisations from the Polish Association of Professional Nurses to the Polish Nurses’ Association, as well as professional development in nursing, including legislation, specialisation and the establishment of trade unions. The conference gathered a large group of nurses, including representatives of the Ministry of Health, researchers, academic teachers, managers and practitioners, as well as representatives of other professions.

Members of the Main Historical Commission also participated in numerous historical conferences held at universities in Wrocław, Gdańsk, Kielce and Kraków. Grażyna Gierczak represented the Commission at the ICN 2025 Congress in Helsinki.

The activities of the Historical Commission play an important role in preserving professional heritage and strengthening the professional identity of nurses. Through archival work, exhibitions and educational initiatives, the Commission contributes to the preservation of nursing heritage and to international cooperation within the European nursing history community.

On March 7-8, 2025, the VII International Meeting on the History of Nursing took place. Entitled “Guardians of the Higeia: Historical Legacy of Community Nursing”, the event was held at the Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Castelo, with the support of the local municipality.

In addition to the scientific program, there was an exhibition open to the public on “Nursing, a nursing school and primary health care in Viana do Castelo”.



Figure 1: VII International Meeting on the History of Nursing 2025

There was also a guided tour to the outstanding museum Hospital-Ship “Gil Eannes”. This vessel is a former Portuguese hospital ship, now a museum. Built in 1955, it originally supported the Portuguese cod fishing fleet in the waters of Newfoundland and Greenland by providing medical, nursing and other services.

In the meeting, some personalities were honored with the title of honorary members: Margarida Vieira, founder of SPHE and professor at the Catholic University of Portugal,

who would pass away on July 29; Maria Antónia Lopes, professor at the University of Coimbra, director of the [EAHN Bulletin 15/2025](#)

PhD program in History; and João Rui Pita, professor at the Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Coimbra and vice-president of the International Academy of History of Pharmacy.

It was also presented the book “History of Nursing in Portugal (1143-1988)”, coordinated by nursing history researchers Ana Pires, Ana Paula Gato, Analisa Candeias, Carlos Subtil, Constança Festas, Lucília Nunes, Paulo Queirós and Rui Costa.



Figure 2: Book: “History of Nursing in Portugal (1143-1988)”

The book deals with the history of health and its agents, particularly nurses, from the foundation of Portugal to the integration of nursing education into higher education. It is organized into two parts.

The first one is organized around a diachronic axis with three periods: 1) From the beginnings of the nation to the

end of the 15th century; 2) From the Modern Age to the Liberal Revolution (1820); 3) The contemporary period, which runs from the end of the monarchy, through the First Republic, the Military Dictatorship, the *Estado Novo* and the Third Republic, until 1988.

The second part deals with events and contexts (micro-history), in which the authors focus on the history of nurse training, assistance to specific populations, gender issues, and special care environments, framing nursing and care issues within their respective socio-cultural and political frameworks, allowing the reader to historically contextualize the events. Throughout the book, reference was made to people and groups who, due to their uniqueness, were significant in the historical trajectory of the profession, such as nursing monks and nuns, S. João de Deus, wet nurses or even paratrooper nurses. The early days of nursing education were also explored, describing the first initiatives for nursing courses, their successes and failures, the transition to current nursing courses, culminating in their integration into higher education. It also includes accounts of healthcare contexts that allowed access to the evolution of nurses' intervention environments: from hospitals to leper colonies, including charitable institutions, the community, and even disaster or war scenarios.

The book also highlights the political, social, and familial control of nurses that conditioned nursing and its subjugation

to explicit or implicit powers. In the political dimension, the nonconformity, aspirations, and struggles for the dignity and development of the profession are evident, particularly during the dictatorship period, in which debates are launched, and the class organizes itself through unions and associations. This work demystifies concepts stemming from the transposition of the history of nursing in Europe to the Iberian Peninsula, namely the link between care and religious orders and women, which, in the Portuguese case, was an essentially secular and male practice until the end of the 19th century. It also demonstrates the proactivity, nonconformity, and affirmation of the profession throughout approximately 800 years of Portuguese history.

It has been presented at various academic forums, including the Porto Book Fair (*Feira do Livro do Porto*), a book fair visited by thousands of people (<https://www.uceditora.ucp.pt/pt/varia/3407-historia-da-enfermagem-em-portugal.html>).

Throughout the year, SPHE also held conferences and lectures in several nursing schools and faculties, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and maintained partnerships with similar professional organizations, particularly in Spain.

Spain – Associació Febe d'Historia de la Infermeria de llengua catalana

by *María Eugenia Galiana-Sánchez*



For Febe, 2025 has been a year of intense scientific activity and research transfer. In organisational terms, there have been changes in the management of the association. The previous president, Anna Ramio, who has had a long and successful career coordinating the association, has handed over the presidency to Miquel Àngel Calderó, who has formed a team consisting of Anna Ramio as vice-president, Gloria Gallego as treasurer and Ester Mateo as secretary. The task of this team is to continue promoting high-quality research and teaching in the history of nursing, which is reflected in projects, publications and conference presentations. In line with these objectives, in April 2025 Febe organised the 2nd Conference on Nursing History Research at the Official College of Nurses of Barcelona (COIB), with a large turnout from members.

In 2025, one of the most important projects of Febe have been 'Preservem la memòria' (Let's Preserve Memory), <https://preservemlamemoria.coib.cat/>, on which researchers Amèlia Guilera, Carmina Olive, Anna Ramió, Carmen Vila and Montserrat Venturas are working intensively. The project, which began in 2021, aims to recover and preserve the memory of nurses in Barcelona, facilitating and encouraging research. Information is collected through semi-structured individual interviews that are rec-

orded on video. Currently, 230 interviews have been conducted and 182 transcribed.

As a result of this and other projects throughout 2025, the following research results have been generated:

Conferences

JANUARY 2025. Second Nursing Meeting of the Emergency and Urgent Care Committee of the Official College of Nurses of Lleida, Carme Vila, 'History of Nursing in Emergency Services'.

MARCH 2025. European Social Science History Conference. Leiden, María Eugenia Galiana-Sánchez; Rocío Martínez-Zapata; Josep Bernabeu-Mestre. Reproductive health in the Maternal-Child Assistance Programme 'At the Service of Spain and the Spanish child, 1938-1962'.

APRIL 2025, 2nd Conference on Nursing History Research by Febe. A doctoral thesis presentation table was organised, along with a lecture entitled 'Journalistic research by a war nurse' and a book presentation session: Nurses in Action (1901-2019) by Dr Carme Torres; Barcelona Hospitalaria, 14th-20th Centuries, by Dr Josep Barceló; Giving Visibility to Nursing. Evolució de les cures infermeres en el hospital del Mar de Barcelona (Giving Visibility to Nurses. Evolution of Nursing Care at the Hospital

del Mar in Barcelona) by Dr Carme Vila; and *Enfermeres en guerra* (Nurses at War) by Dr M. Cinta Sadurní.

JUNE 2025. International Nurses Congress (CIE) in Helsinki: Calderó Solé, MA; Torres Penella, C; Gea Sanchez, M; Blanco Blanco, J; Laza Vásquez, C, "Nursing resistance in Spain against the loss of the professional title of "nurse" in favour of "health technician". The case of Rosa Fernández in Lleida' and the poster by Lorena Tejero. "Tiktok: A useful tool for relearning the history of nursing".

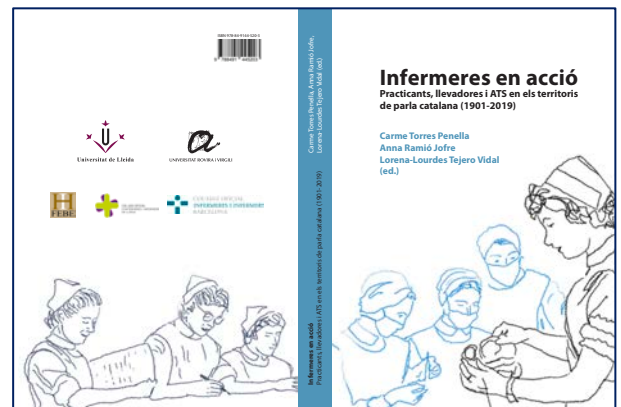
SEPTEMBER 2025. 19th Congress of the Spanish Society for the History of Medicine. Madrid. 'Calderó Solé, MA, Tejero Vidal, L, Torres Penella, C. The professionalisation of nursing in Lleida from its origins to the first half of the 20th century; Anna Ramió and Carme Torres, 'Nurses and the Spanish Civil War in Catalonia. Contributions to the professionalisation process' and Carme Torres and Anna Ramió. 'Health and social context. Nurses' care practices in the Civil War. The thematic panel 'The importance of oral sources in the preservation of collective memory' was particularly relevant, where the project 'Preservem la memòria' (Preserve Memory) was presented by Anna Ramio, Carmina Oliver, Carme Vila and Montserrat Ventura.

OCTOBER 25, 1st Congress on Research and Memory of the International Brigades (SIDBRINT, University of Barcelona). 'Cinta Sadurní-Bassols, Gloria Gallego-Caminero and Sioban Nelson (University of Toronto), Suffering and Recovery of International Brigade Nurses in the Spanish Civil War'. The research studies stories of generosity that are fundamental to understanding the vulnerability and resilience of the national and international nurses who participated in the Spanish Civil War and suffered extremely serious consequences.

Selected publications

- Torres Penella C, Ramió Jofre A, Tejero Vidal L (Coord.). Nurses in action. Practitioners, midwives and nursing assistants in Catalan-speaking territories (1901-2019). Ed. University of Lleida, 2024. https://doi.org/10.21001/infermeres_en_accio.2024. Reconstructs the professional trajectories of nurses in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Andorra, contextualising them over a period of 120 years.
- Tejero, C. End-of-life care in the reform of the San Juan de Dios Nursing Service. *Culture of Care*, 2025, 47-61. DOI: 10.14198/cuid.29248.

- Tejero, L. Building nursing students' professional identity through the 'design process' methodology: a qualitative study. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 2025, e104256. DOI: 10.1016/j.nepr.2025.104256.
- Galiana-Sánchez, María Eugenia, The professionalisation of nurses and midwives: the Spanish example, In: *History of Health and Medicine. A Transcultural Approach*. Ed. Routledge. In press.
- Galiana-Sánchez, María Eugenia; Josep Bernabeu and Gloria Gallego-Caminero; The role of the public health nursing expert in the interwar period: the example of collaboration between Spain and the Rockefeller Foundation. In: *Medical science and healthcare. The role of international research stays and collaboration networks in its transformation*. Ed. Catarata.



Other research and transfer activities

Ester Mateo Aguilar supervised the student's Final Degree Project entitled 'Historical Vision of the Nurse in Educational Settings,' which offers a rigorous analysis of the role of nurses in educational institutions throughout history.

Carme Torres Penella gave a lecture entitled 'Nursing in Lleida Hospitals during the Civil War' at the Official College of Physicians of Lleida.

Montserrat Ventura participates as Secretary of the History Commission of the Hospital Clínic Barcelona, where she is compiling the oral history of important figures in the history of the hospital and collaborating in the creation of the historical archive.

Finally, Carmina Olivé is working on two other emerging projects: the introduction of important nurses into Wikipedia and the development of a museum based on donations from nurses.

Switzerland – Swiss Society for the History of Health and Nursing

by Sabine Braunschweig & Kristin Hammer

Unfortunately, our Swiss Society for the History of Nursing and Health is in the same situation as last year. As we did not find any new board members, we continue our activity on a very small scale. We provide our members with news about books and papers, exhibitions and conferences on a non-regular basis. They do not pay a member-fee for this service.

Many voluntary organisations are currently experiencing difficulties in recruiting active members in Switzerland.

This is also the case for the Swiss Professional Association of Nursing Staff (SBK). For financial reasons, it is being forced to reform its structures this year so that it can continue to promote nursing as a profession and support its members with less money. In this period of upheaval, the archiving of historical documents is of central importance. This is a matter of great importance to us, and we have actively supported it.



Figure: Sabine Braunschweig cataloguing an archive in the basement of the organisation, November 2025.

United Kingdom –The UK Association for the History of Nursing (UKAHN)

by *Alannah Tomkins (editor of the UKAHN Bulletin)*

The annual research Colloquium for the UK Association for the History of Nursing took place at the University of Keele in Staffordshire on 25 June 2025. Seven papers and three posters were presented on the day, by a mixture of home and international speakers.

Our first panel comprised two papers that considered aspects of nursing at hospitals in London in the first twenty years of the twentieth century. Sue Hawkins used the notebooks of a nursing probationer to offer an inside view of the children’s hospital in Great Ormond Street. The notebooks of Ada Bois are unusual because they record her experiences chiefly in images. The drawings provide a humorous or satirical perspective on the supercilious attitudes of the senior hospital staff, and the nurse-trainees’ fears of infection (where germs are represented as imps).



Figure 1: Image from GOS/11/18/9 Papers and memorabilia of Great Ormond Street Nurses. Notebooks of Ada Bois. Reproduced with permission of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust, Museum and Archive Service.

Janet Hargreaves spoke about the West London Hospital and its work with venereal patients. VD clinics were of-

fered at the hospital in the wake of legislation which recognised the need to tackle high rates of infection. Molly Morris was a nurse who assisted in staffing the clinics and who wrote a memoir in 1960, including insights into the human dimension of her work. Just as important as the treatment on offer was the encouragement that patients required to keep them coming back for repeat appointments. Nurses like Morris were integral to creating a non-judgemental environment.

The ‘Nottinghamshire Nightingales’ were a subset of the women recruited to Florence Nightingale’s nurse probationer scheme at St Thomas’s Hospital during its earliest years. David Stewart talked about the first manuscript book recording the names of nurse trainees from 1860 onwards, and asked why so many of the women came from the county of Nottinghamshire. He spoke about the group’s connections to religious non-conformity, and then focused on one woman’s longer career. Mary Barker spent some years working in Australia before returning to the UK to nurse in Edinburgh.

The posters demonstrated the importance of biography for the history of nursing, albeit in different ways. The life of Anne Larkin, an Irish emigrant to the USA, was discussed by Gavin Wilk. Larkin qualified in 1899 and her career lay mainly in public-health nursing, but she also spent time in Italy during 1918. Thomas Costello belonged to a younger generation than Larkin, and he remained in Ireland. Judi Pettigrew talked about the survival of Costello’s archive relating to his work as an occupational therapist and psychiatric nurse in Galway. Elizabeth Pearson’s poster flagged the value of biography for recent work by the Diaspora Uganda Nurses and Midwives’ Society (DUNMS). Their exhibition held in May 2025 aimed to recognise the leadership legacies of nurse pioneers in Uganda.

The development of critical care nursing in Manchester has been the topic of research by Sharon Whiting. She has

generated oral histories from thirteen retired nurses and from one consultant surgeon to unpack the development of intensive nursing. From 1967 onwards, new ways of working with critical adult patients arose from a fusion of nursing techniques with new technological skills/equipment. A two-bed pilot unit was remembered as a stimulating working environment.

Jan-Thore Lockertsen analysed the ways that Norwegian nurses were inadvertently prepared for their work during the Second World War. He covered the period from the country's independence in 1905 until 1940, and the ways that civilian nurses participated in military nursing abroad. Norwegian women and men experienced service during the First Balkan War, the First World War, the Finnish Civil War, the Second Italian-Ethiopian War and the Spanish Civil War before the hostilities of 1939 onwards. Their humanitarian response to these conflicts coincidentally offered a form of training for wartime nursing.

The final panel of the day looked at British women who did extraordinary things, within or beyond their roles as nurses. Vari Drennan identified women prominent in the suffrage campaign of 1906-14, namely the nurses arrested for their militant activity. Nurses made up a relatively small occupational group among the 1000 or more women

arrested in total, representing 2-3%, but the nature of their experiences was poignant. Fanny Pease, for example, was sent to Holloway Prison.

Amanda Gwinnup closed the day with her talk about Florence Saunders, a pioneering district nurse in Peterborough. Saunders founded the Peterborough District Nursing Association and took the unusual step of buying a house as accommodation for herself and two other nurses, at a time when district nursing relied on public subscriptions for funding. She left no personal archive, so her history must be gathered from district-nursing reports and from newspaper articles.



Figure 2: Kingston University

Next year the Colloquium will take place at Kingston University in south-west London on 1 June 2026. Look out for further details and booking information on the UKAHN website.



The European Association for the History of Nursing (EAHN)

The European Association for the History of Nursing (EAHN) was established 2012 to promote development and advancement of Nursing History through scholarly work and public out- reach. The Association brings individuals and associations together in order to provide mutual support and opportunities for collaboration.

The purpose of the Association is to provide a European focus for the development of the discipline of Nursing History. It has three aims:

To promote scholarly work in the Nursing History, by providing a mutually supportive network of individuals working in the field and by creating opportunities for direct collaboration on significant research projects.

To promote the public understanding of Nursing History, by supporting initiatives for public engagement.

To gain recognition for the discipline of Nursing History throughout the European region.

The Association has a federal structure. Constituent member associations are autonomous and self-governing. A constituent association may be administered through an academic centre, a scholarly society or an interest group. Each constituent association will be eligible to send at least one member to a European Coordinating Committee.

The membership comprises individuals who are members of a constituent association. The membership is intended to be inclusive. Members may be nurses or non-nurses, and might or might not hold an appointment in a recognised academic institution. An individual from any part of the

world may join any of the constituent associations, and thereby become a member of the EAHN.

EAHN member associations

(Contact email addresses see: <http://eahn.net/member-organisations/>)

Austria: Historical nursing research in Austria

Belgium: The Belgian Association for the History of Nursing

Croatia: Croatian Nursing History Society

Denmark: The Danish Museum of Nursing

Finland: Finnish Association for History of Nursing Science

Germany: German Association for the History of Nursing (GAHN)

Ireland: The Irish Association for the History of Nursing and Midwifery

Israel: The Israeli Society for the History of Nursing (ISHN)

Italy: Italian Nurses' Association with a Nursing History Group, CNAI (Consociazione nazionale delle Associazioni infermiere/i)

The Netherlands: Historical College Florence Nightingale Institute

The Netherlands: Stichting Historisch Verpleegkundig Bezit (SHVB)

Republic of North Macedonia: Association of nurses, technicians, midwives and dental nurses "For Us" (ZMSTAS ZA NAS) from the Republic of North Macedonia

Norway: The Norwegian Association for the History of Nursing

Poland: Museum and Archive for Polish Nursing History at the Polish Nurses Association

Portugal: Sociedade Portuguesa de História da Enfermagem

Serbia: Association of Medical Nurses-Technicians

Slovenia: Working Group for Preserving the History of Nursing and Midwifery of the Nurses and Midwives Association of Slovenia

Spain: Associació Febe d'Historia de la Infermeria de llengua catalana

Spain: Qalat Chábir. Asociación Cultural para el Estudio de las Humanidades

Sweden: The Swedish Society of Nursing (Svensk sjuksköterskeförening)

Switzerland: Swiss Society for the History of Health and Nursing

United Kingdom: The UK Association for the History of Nursing

EAHN Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee consists of delegates from the member association. The committee meets at least once per year.

EAHN Coordinating Committee elected officers

President Hugo Schalkwijk, The Netherlands

Vice President Maja Mrakovic, Serbia

Deputy President Secretary Dr Gerard Fealy, Ireland

Communications Officer Anna La Torre, Italy

Treasurer Prof Dr Karen Nolte, Germany

EAHN Bulletin

The annually EAHN Bulletin is published on the EAHN web page. Editor of the Bulletin is Prof Dr Karen Nolte, Germany (<http://eahn.net/contact/>)

EAHN webpage

The EAHN webpage <http://www.eahn.net> is managed by web-master Anna LaTorre, Italy (<http://eahn.net/contact/>)

EAHN Twitter account

The EAHN Twitter account EAHN@HistNursingEU is edited by Dr Anja Peters, Germany

Membership

If your association would like to affiliate with the EAHN please contact EAHN president Anna La Torre, Italy (<http://eahn.net/contact/>). There are no fees for membership.

EAHN meeting 2026

The next EAHN Coordinating Committee meeting will be held on **February 6, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Zagreb, Croatia**, at the Catholic University of Croatia, Ilica 244, 1000 Zagreb.

Participation is possible online:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85932094628?pwd=Do7eVc5LsH6aRbhr3OIBuCaA3Jjc2L1>

Meeting-ID: 859 3209 4628

Identification Code: 940698