

RESEARCH ARTICLE**Nursing History of Turkish Cypriots**Ufuk Kaya¹ , Kerem Yıldız² ¹Eastern Mediterranean University School of Health Services, Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus²Eastern Mediterranean University Faculty of Health Sciences, Famagusta, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus**Abstract**

In terms of the historical development of nursing and education for Turkish Cypriots, articles in the literature are quite limited. The Cypriots initially stayed away from the nursing profession. In this period, the profession was carried out by nurses (sisters) who came to Cyprus from England. However, in time, the Cypriots also started to adopt the nursing profession. The first breakthrough in the field of nursing was the British government's sending a Turkish Cypriot (Türkan Aziz) and two Greek women to a nursing school in Beirut for a three-year education in 1935. After these years, the nursing profession and education were adversely affected after the attacks that started in 1963 but did not stop. Vocational School of Nursing was established in 1994 and has trained nurses for many years. Following this, nursing undergraduate, master and doctoral education have been started to be given in many universities in Northern Cyprus.

Keywords: Cyprus, History of nursing, Turkish Cypriot**Introduction**

The first name that comes to mind in the field of nursing is Florence Nightingale. Nightingale, in her book published in 1858, defined nursing as "a non-therapeutic process that aims to bring the patient to the best conditions, especially providing a supportive environment during the recovery process". The International Council of Nursing (ICN) introduced a definition to nursing in 1995 as "the treatment and diagnosis of individuals' reactions to their Health and illness" (Karadakovan & Eti Alan, 2017). The Turkish Nurses Association (1981) defined nursing as follows: "Responsible for the planning, organization, implementation, evaluation of nursing services for the purpose of protecting, developing and improving the Health and well-being of the individual, family and society, and for the training of those who will perform these services; It is a health discipline consisting of science and art" (Akça Ay, 2015).

The World Health Organization (WHO) stated four main functions of nurses in 1993. These (1) to provide and manage nursing care services to individuals and/or patients, families and societies for the purposes of protection, treatment and rehabilitation; (2) to educate patients, health care providers and individuals providing health care; (3) to work

as an active member in health care; and (4) to improve nursing practice through research and critical thinking (Akça Ay, 2015; Akdemir & Birol, 2011).

Nurses who carry out theoretical and scientific-based practices have many roles. These roles are caregiver, educator, researcher, manager, decision maker, patient advocate, communication and coordination provider, rehabilitative, comforting, therapeutic, career-developing, autonomous and responsible consultancy. These roles are developing day-by-day and their number is increasing. In this way, an increase in the scientific knowledge, application opportunities and powers of the profession can be achieved (Taylan et al., 2012).

It is known that the professional identity of nursing started in 1854 with the care given to the soldiers in the Crimean War by Florence Nightingale. In Turkey, especially before Nightingale, women played a role in the field of health during the Anatolian Seljuks period. The "Volunteer Caregiver Course" was given for 6 months in Turkey, where formal education in the field of nursing started in 1911, and educated Turkish women who completed this course continued the care and treatment of soldiers for the first time in 1912 during the Balkan War. Parallel to the development of the

Corresponding author

Ufuk Kaya, E-mail: ufukkaya91@gmail.com

Cite this article as: Kaya U, Yıldız K. (2022). Nursing History of Turkish Cypriots. *Mediterranean Nursing and Midwifery*, 1(3), 131-135.Content of this journal is licensed under a Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

nursing profession in Europe, women from all socio-economic levels began to be interested in this profession in Turkey as well. Courses continued in 1913-1914, and a Private Nursing School was opened in Istanbul Admiral Bristol Hospital in 1920. While the duration of the school attended by the minorities living in Istanbul was 2.6 years at the beginning, it later increased to 3 years. In the following time, the education period of the school was 4 years in 1957 (Akça Ay, 2015).

In the following years, nursing education and profession continued to develop in Turkey. Today, modern nursing education continues by being reinforced with scientific and theoretical applications and maintains its professional prestige.

Scientific articles are very limited in terms of the historical development of Turkish Cypriot nursing and education. Therefore, in this review, it is aimed to examine the historical process of the professional and educational development of Turkish Cypriot nurses who are members of the profession.

Historical Development of the Turkish Cypriot Nursing Profession

Historical Development between the 19th Century-1949

The history of nursing in Cyprus dates back to the 16th century and started after the British took over the administration of the island. During this period, Dr. Frederick C. Heidenstam established a medical team of local and volunteer individuals and began providing public health education. Five health personnel trained by Dr. Heidenstam himself successfully completed their training in 1880 and started their duties at Larnaca Hospital with the title of assistant health personnel. Following the opening of the Nicosia General Hospital in 1892, the nurses who will be relative in this hospital were trained in England and the caregivers were trained in the hospital. In 1896, the Colonial Nursing Association was established to meet the nurse needs of the British colonies. Cyprus also applied to this union and requested that a nurse be sent to the island. The request was approved and a branch of the union was opened in Cyprus (Beratlı, 2018).

The profession, which was initially avoided by the public, was adopted by the Cypriot people over time, but mostly nurses from England carried out the profession. Over time, especially male individuals have come to the fore in nursing. As of 1927, only six British nurse with a degree and one home-visiting nurse worked in hospitals in Cyprus. Vocational skills and

literacy courses were given to young girls who attended the nursing courses opened in the same year (An, 2014; Beratlı, 2018; Çoban, 2018).

Nursing education began in 1931 at the Nicosia General Hospital. The name of this school that trains caregivers is known as Nursing and Midwifery Training School. However, in this period, caregivers were referred to as "nurse" and nurses as "sister" (Beratlı, 2018).

The first Turkish Cypriot nurse was Ferhunde Hacı Ahmet. Ahmet, who is not a graduate of a nursing school, gained success thanks to her intelligence and attention, and other Turkish Cypriot women became more interested in the profession thanks to Ahmet. It is stated that the number of Turkish nurses and midwives trained mostly from practice was more than 50 in 1932 (An, 2014). In the same year, thanks to the Midwifery Law, a six-month midwifery course was started to be given to people who want to do the profession. With the changes made after that, the course's year was changed to one year, two years and three years. During this period, those who wanted to be nurses had to be at least secondary school and those who would study abroad had to be high school graduates (Çoban, 1999, 2018).

The first breakthrough in the field of nursing was the British government's sending a Turkish Cypriot and two Greek women (Türkan Aziz) to a nursing school in Beirut (American University of Beirut) for a three-year scholarship in 1935. In the continuation of this breakthrough, four Cypriot women in 1938 and three in 1939 were sent to the same school. The nursing school was opened in 1940. After 8 years, Türkan Aziz served as the head nurse of Nicosia General Hospital (the first head nurse and the first trained Turkish nurse), while Ferhunde Hacı Ahmet served as the operating room nurse. Safiye Niyazi, another certified female nurse, whose name was mentioned with Türkan Aziz in the same years (Çoban, 1999; An, 2014).

Türkan Aziz was sent to England to receive tuberculosis training in 1940 and when she returned to the island, she started to work as a head nurse at the Tuberculosis Hospital. Aziz, who also completed the 6-month midwifery course, which is one of the conditions in the country, was appointed to the position of Nursing Manager after returning to the island (Beratlı, 2018; Çoban, 2018).

Since the majority of the participants in the courses and trainings are Greek, the nursing trainings affiliated to Nicosia General Hospital were given in English and Greek languages. For this reason, Turkish students who do not know Greek well had difficulties in the education process. For this reason, Turkish physician Dr. Fikret Rasim started to give Turkish courses in 1948 for the benefit of Turkish nurses and midwives (Beratlı, 2018). The fact that Türkan Aziz was appointed as the head nurse (matron) at the Nicosia General Hospital in the same year (1948) increased the interest of the Turkish Cypriot people in the nursing profession (Çoban, 2018).

Main Points

- The nursing profession is a professional science and art based on nursing theories.
- It is of great importance that everyone who is assigned and trained in the field of nursing knows the history of nursing.
- Thanks to this review article, which has been brought to the literature on the professional and educational history of Turkish Cypriot nursing, a new resource has been brought to the field.

Table 1
Summary of the Historical Process of Turkish Cypriot Nursing

01	1931	Beginning of nursing training at Nicosia General Hospital
02	Ferhunde Hacı Ahmet	First Turkish Cypriot nurse (without diploma)
03	1935	Sending Türkan Aziz to the American University of Beirut for nursing education
04	Türkan Aziz	The first matron and the first trained Turkish nurse
05	1951	Branching of Nursing with the "Nursing Law"
06	Firdevs İslamoğlu	First Turkish Cypriot teacher nurse
07	1951	Opening of Nursing School within Nicosia General Hospital
08	1951	Reaching an agreement for Turkish Cypriot students to study in Turkey
09	1970-1970	Opening of Nurse-Midwifery School affiliated to Nicosia Turkish Hospital
10	1994	Opening of Vocational School of Nursing
11	2006	Beginning of four-year undergraduate education in nursing
12	2007	Beginning of master education in nursing
13	2008	Beginning of PhD programmes in nursing
14	2018	Establishment of the Faculty of Nursing

Historical Development between 1950 and 1989

The first thing that stood out in this period was the requirement for the nurses and caregivers to be registered with the state in 1950. Registered nurses and caregivers have been appointed as Nurse-Midwifery by the Cyprus Nursing and Midwifery Council (Beratlı, 2018).

The division of nursing into branches was realized with the amendment made in the Nursing Law in 1951. Accordingly, midwifery, nursing, psychiatric diseases, pediatric and other departments were formed. In the following years, Firdevs İslamoğlu, who received nursing and midwifery education in England with the contributions of Türkan Aziz, started to work as a Turkish Cypriot licensed nurse (sister). It is stated that the number of Turkish Cypriot nurses was nine and/or 10 as of 1963 (An, 2014).

After receiving her nursing education in England, Firdevs İslamoğlu completed the trainer's training program in Australia. İslamoğlu is known as the first Turkish Cypriot teacher nurse. Among other firsts, Günay Derviş appears as the first Turkish Cypriot public health nurse, and Hüseyin Sarper and Baykal Sarper as the first psychiatric nurses (Beratlı, 2018; Çoban, 2018).

In this period (1951), thanks to the Nurse and Midwife Law, a nursing school was opened for three years after high school education, under the Nicosia General Hospital. However, the education and training language of the school was maintained in English (Çoban, 2018).

In the same year (1951), an agreement was reached with the Turkish Consulate General. According to this, it was decided to provide a scholarship and send five people to Turkey for nursing education. First of all, Vedia Atalay, Ayten Hüseyin, Pervin Salih, Suzan Korkut and Zehra received nursing education in Turkey. Sending students to nursing education in Turkey has further increased the interest of Turkish Cypriots in the profession and the number of Turkish nurses has increased (Çoban, 2018). A year later (1952), it is stated that there are 30 Cypriots studying in British schools in the current records (Beratlı, 2018).

In the following years, the attacks launched against the Turkish Cypriots in 1963 brought many negative practices and results. As a result of the embargoes applied to the Turkish people as a result of the attacks, new searches were made in health services. For this, it is possible to come across practices created out of nothing, such as turning a tobacco factory in Nicosia into a hospital. Nurses, midwives, caregivers and other health officials serving in this period (1963-67) were presented with a "war service certificate" (Çoban, 1999 2018).

In addition to the low number of nurses, nurses served in places lacking medical supplies and equipment. Turkish women were given first aid training to respond to the wounded in the Erenköy attacks. This practice is based on volunteerism. After the attacks, some did not continue their voluntary practices, but some continued to serve voluntarily

in hospitals. In fact, a volunteer group has been created within the hospitals and the number of volunteers has increased over time (Çoban, 2018).

Upon the increase in the number of individuals receiving nursing education in Beirut, England and Turkey, studies were initiated by the Ministry of Health in 1970 in order to provide nursing education on the island. According to this, after the secondary or high school education period, programs aimed at providing nursing education have started (Çoban, 2018). In the same year, the Nurse-Midwife School was opened within the body of Nicosia Turkish Hospital (according to some sources 1970, Çoban, 2018) and continued its education until 1974 (Beratlı, 2018). Nursing education was mostly included in the curriculum of the Nursing and Midwife School. The school moved to Famagusta in 1981 and continued education until 1995 (Çoban, 2018).

The Nursing-Midwife School was moved to Famagusta Hospital after 1974, but in order to adapt the hospital to world standards, the school was moved to the top floor of Dr. Burhan Nalbantoğlu State Hospital (Nicosia), and the training period was increased to three years (Beratlı, 2018).

During the Cyprus Peace Operation (1974), the need for nurses increased again. During this period, volunteers joined the nursing staff again. In 1963, when the attacks began, theoretical and practical training was given to individuals whose education was unfinished, and they were provided to complete their training. During these periods, people who graduated from the nursery and midwife school were given the title of "caregiver", those who graduated from nursing schools in Turkey were given the title of "assistant nurse", and individuals who graduated from universities in Turkey were given the title of "nurse". 10 years after the operation (1984), after graduating from high school, the Midwifery-Patient Nursing School, which provided 3 years of education, was closed and changed the way of accepting students and started to provide education for 3 years after secondary school. In addition to the 3-year education curriculum of the school, 1-year midwifery training was also provided. The education continued until 1990 (Çoban, 2018).

Historical Development after 1990

The name of the Midwifery and Nursing School was changed to Nurse and Midwife School in 1990. In these years, the difficulties in the legal process were eliminated and the Vocational School of Nursing, which was given the equivalence of the Republic of Turkey Council of Higher Education, was established in 1994 and trained nurses with a two-year curriculum until 2004. The school moved from Famagusta to Nicosia in 1995 (Beratlı, 2018; Çoban, 2018).

Following this, thanks to a protocol, the school was transferred to the Near East University (NEU) in 2006, and undergraduate nursing education was started. In the following period, undergraduate education started

at universities such as Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Girne American University (GAU), Cyprus International University (CIU) and European University of Lefke (EUL). Suna Bent, who graduated from Florence Nightingale School of Nursing in 2001, is a Cypriot nurse who completed her undergraduate education and graduated first. Selma Uptan is the nurse who completed the first master's and doctorate programs in the field of nursing (Çoban, 2018).

With the approval of Council of Higher Education, NEU started its four-year undergraduate nursing education in 2006 and this initiative is a first in Northern Cyprus (Çoban, 2018). In the following process, in the 2010-2011 academic year, EMU (Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi), EUL (Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi, Sağlık Yüksekokulu) in the 2014-2015 academic year, and CIU (Uluslararası Kıbrıs Üniversitesi, Sağlık Bilimleri Yüksekokulu) in the 2015-2016 academic year, nursing undergraduate education started. In Northern Cyprus, the graduate program started in 2007 and the doctorate program started in 2008 (Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi¹, Hemşirelik Fakültesi). In the following years, the Faculty of Nursing was established in 2018 (Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi², Hemşirelik Fakültesi).

In the historical process, the Turkish Cypriot nursing profession and education have experienced many positive and negative developments (Table 1). Since 1963, when the attacks began, the deficiencies and negativities faced by nurses, caregivers and other health personnel did not discourage them. Within these difficulties, the struggle continued for the development of the profession and the education of new individuals. Today, thanks to undergraduate, master and doctoral education in the field of nursing in Northern Cyprus, the profession is getting better day-by-day with a scientific and theoretically based modern understanding.

Author Contributions: Concept – U.K., K.Y.; Design – U.K., K.Y.; Supervision – U.K., K.Y.; Resources – U.K., K.Y.; Literature Search – U.K., K.Y.; Writing Manuscript – U.K., K.Y.; Critical Review – U.K., K.Y.

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Financial Disclosure: The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

References

- Karakakovan A, Eti Alan F. (2017). *Dahili Ve Cerrahi Hastalıklarda Bakım*. Akademisyen Kitabevi, 4.Baskı, Cilt 1, Ankara, Türkiye.
- Akça Ay F. (2015). *Sağlık Uygulamalarında Temel Kavramlar Ve Beceriler*. Nobel Tıp Kitabevleri, 6. Baskı, İstanbul, Türkiye
- Akdemir N., Birol L. (2011). *İç Hastalıkları Ve Hemşirelik Bakımı*. Sistem Offset, 3.Baskı. Türkiye.
- Taylan S., Alan S., Kadioğlu S. (2012). Hemşirelik Roller ve Özerklik. [Roles of nursing and autonomy]. *HEMAR-G*, 3 15, 66-74 <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/985410>.
- Beratlı N. (2018). Kıbrıs ta hemşirelik okulları. Kurstan yüksek eğitime. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 11(55), 234-240. [Crossref]

- An A. (2014). *Tıp Alanındaki İlk Kıbrıslı Türkler*. Söylem Ajans & Basım Hizmetleri, 2.Baskı, Lefkoşa, Kıbrıs.
- Çoban İ. (2018). *Kıbrıs Türk Hemşirelik Tarihi Ve Gelişmeler*. Söylem Matbaa, Lefkoşa, Kıbrıs.
- Çoban İ. (1999). *Çağdaş Hemşire İş Tanımını Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti Hemşirelerinin Benimseme Ve Uygulama Durumu*. T.C. İstanbul Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 1999, İstanbul (Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ülkü Baykal).
- Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi, Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi. Erişim Adresi: <https://www.emu.edu.tr/tr/akademik/fakulteler/saglik-bilimleri-fakultesi/707>, Erişim Tarihi: 19.11.2021.
- Lefke Avrupa Üniversitesi, Sağlık Yüksekokulu. Erişim Adresi: <https://www.eul.edu.tr/akademik/yuksekokullar/saglik-yuksekokulu/>, Erişim Tarihi: 19.11.2021.
- Uluslararası Kıbrıs Üniversitesi, Sağlık Bilimleri Yüksekokulu. Erişim Adresi: <https://www.ciu.edu.tr/page/saglik-bilimleri-yuksekokulu-1976>, Erişim Tarihi: 19.11.2021.
- Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi¹, Hemşirelik Fakültesi. Erişim Adresi: <https://hemsirelik.neu.edu.tr/akademik/>, Erişim Tarihi: 19.11.2021.
- Yakın Doğu Üniversitesi², Hemşirelik Fakültesi. Erişim Adresi: <https://hemsirelik.neu.edu.tr/akademik/hakkimizda/>, Erişim Tarihi: 19.11.2021.