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Nurse competence: what is already known, what needs to be explored by research!

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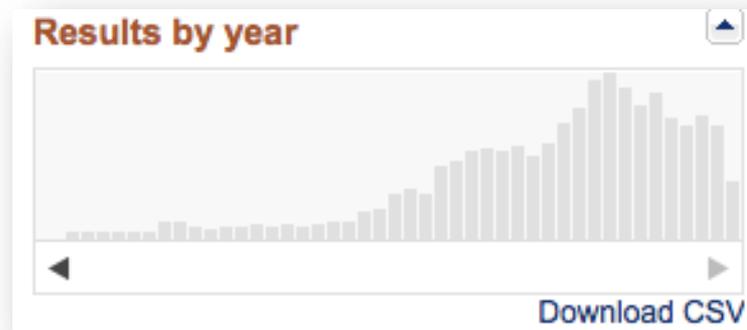
Outline

- Nurse competence: an overview of the concept
- Research questions already explored in this field
- Limitations identified in the knowledge already produced
- What could be the agenda for nurse researchers?

Nurse competence: an overview of the concept

Nurse competence: a popular concept

- Occurrence in Pumbed®:
 - First occurrence in 1952
 - Rise in the mid 90's
 - Peak in 2007



Source: Pubmed® Keywords « Nurse » and « competence »
Sept 2015

- 11 “Prolific countries” in nurse competence scientific production (Blazun & al, 2015)
The 3 top ranked:
 - USA
 - UK
 - Australia



Finland rank is 11



A concept explored in many nursing specialties

The 3 top ranked nursing specialties:

- Community health nursing
- Public health nursing
- Psychiatric nursing

(Blazun & al, 2015)



Why is this concept getting so popular in nursing?

At global level:

- A consequence of the transition from vocational to higher education
- A strategy to reduce tensions of interests between educators and employers

(Cowan & al, 2005)

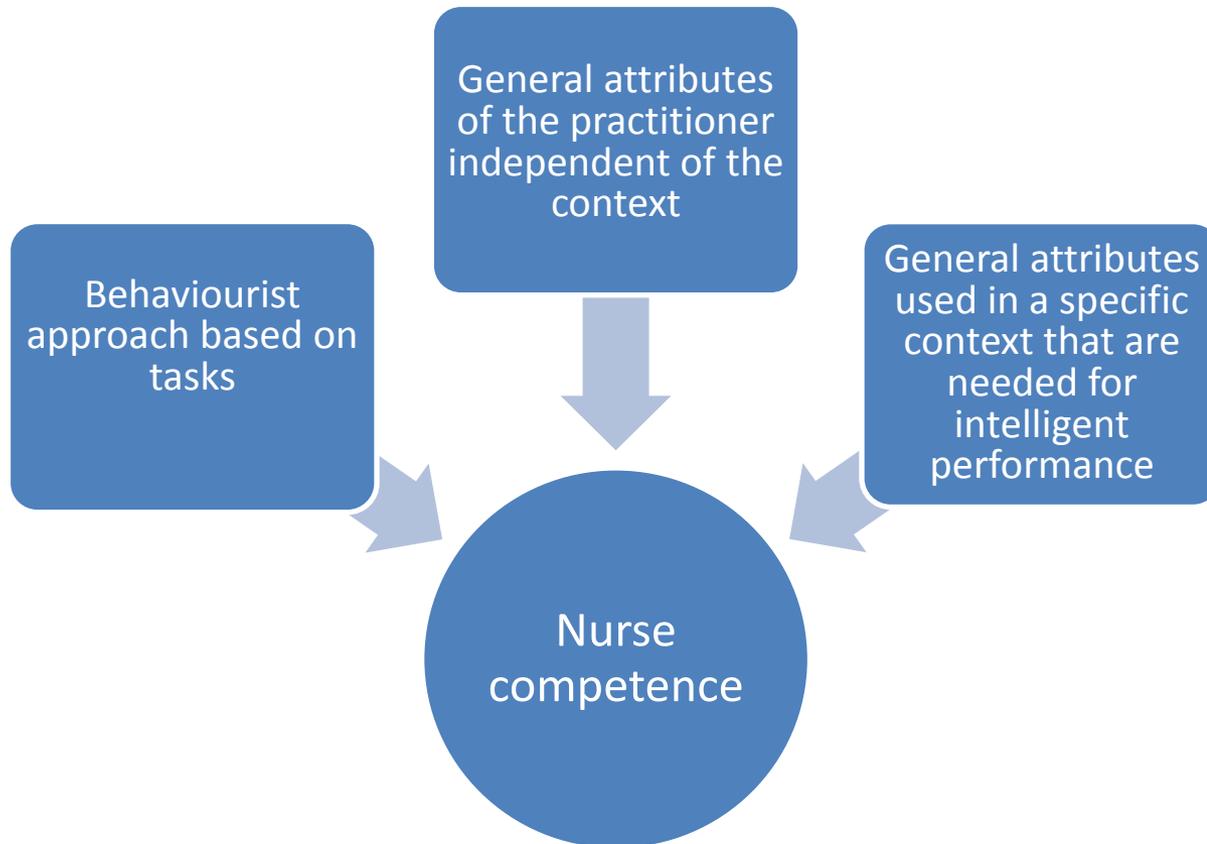
At EU level:

- SLIM project's conclusions
- Advisory committee of the European commission's decision
- Competency based approach as a standard

(Blazun & al, 2015)

3 ways to conceptualize nurse competence

(Gonczi, 1994)





Many definitions...

« The ability to perform a task with desirable outcomes under the varied circumstances of the real world. »

(Benner, 1984)

« Competence has no singular definable meaning and may not be an observable quality, competence could describe a set of characteristics or attributes that underlie competent performance in an occupation. This includes having the insight to be aware of ones own expertise or limitations »

(Pearson & al., 2002)

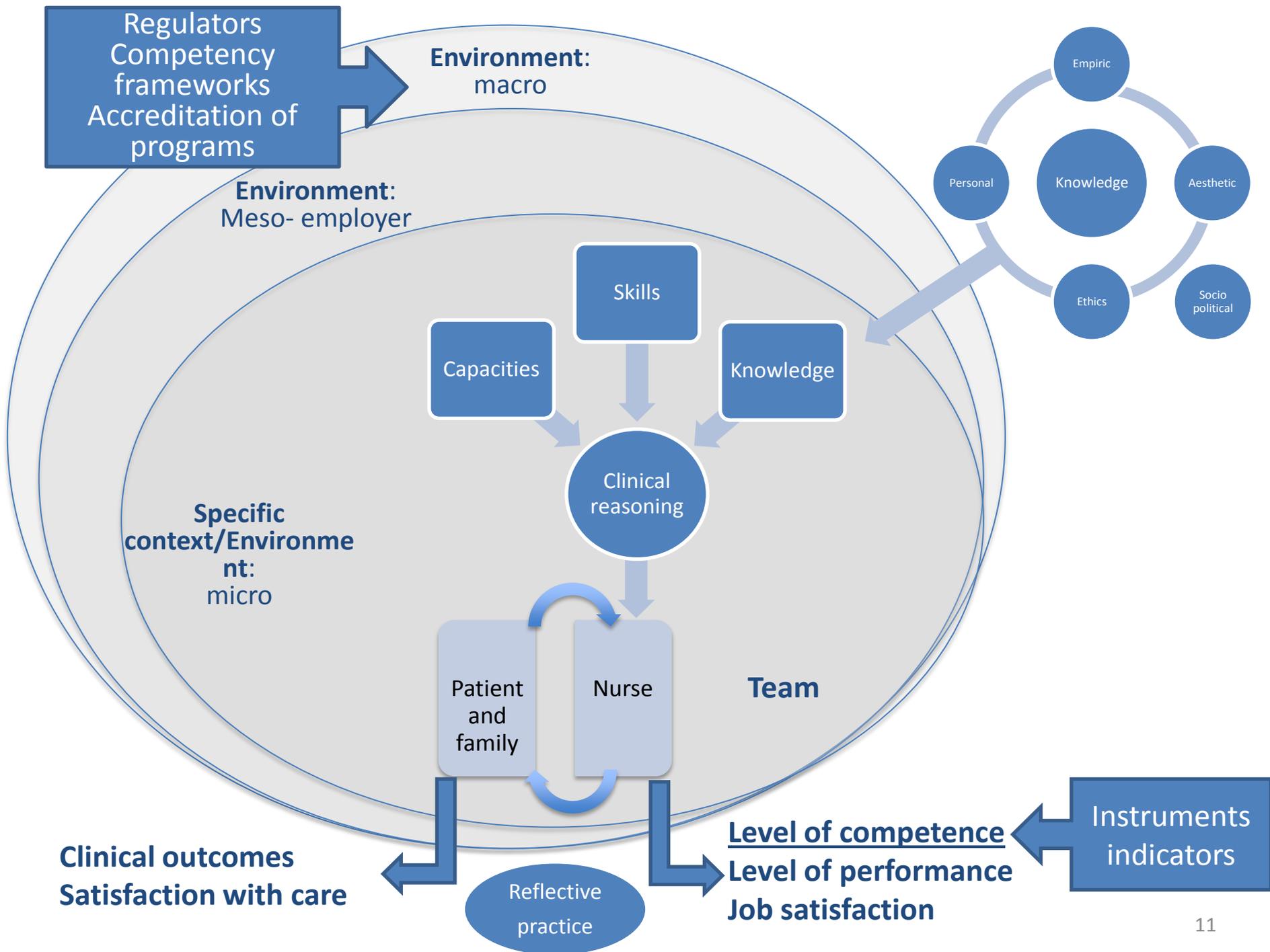


Some tensions identified

- **Narrow definition vs holistic definition** (Short, 1984)
- **Competence vs competency**
(Mc Mullan & al, 2003; Axley, 2008)
- **Competence vs lack of incompetence** (Watson 2002)
- **Doing vs knowing and doing** (Capman, 1999)

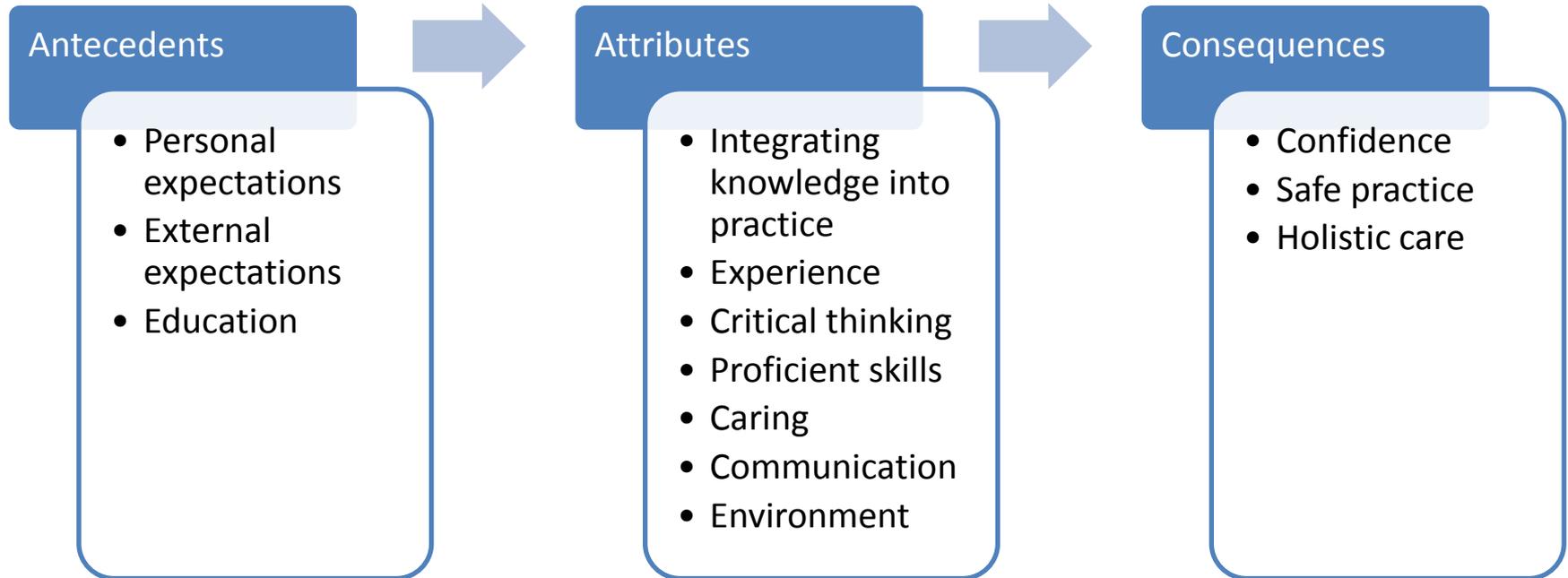
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Nurse competence a holistic and dynamic concept

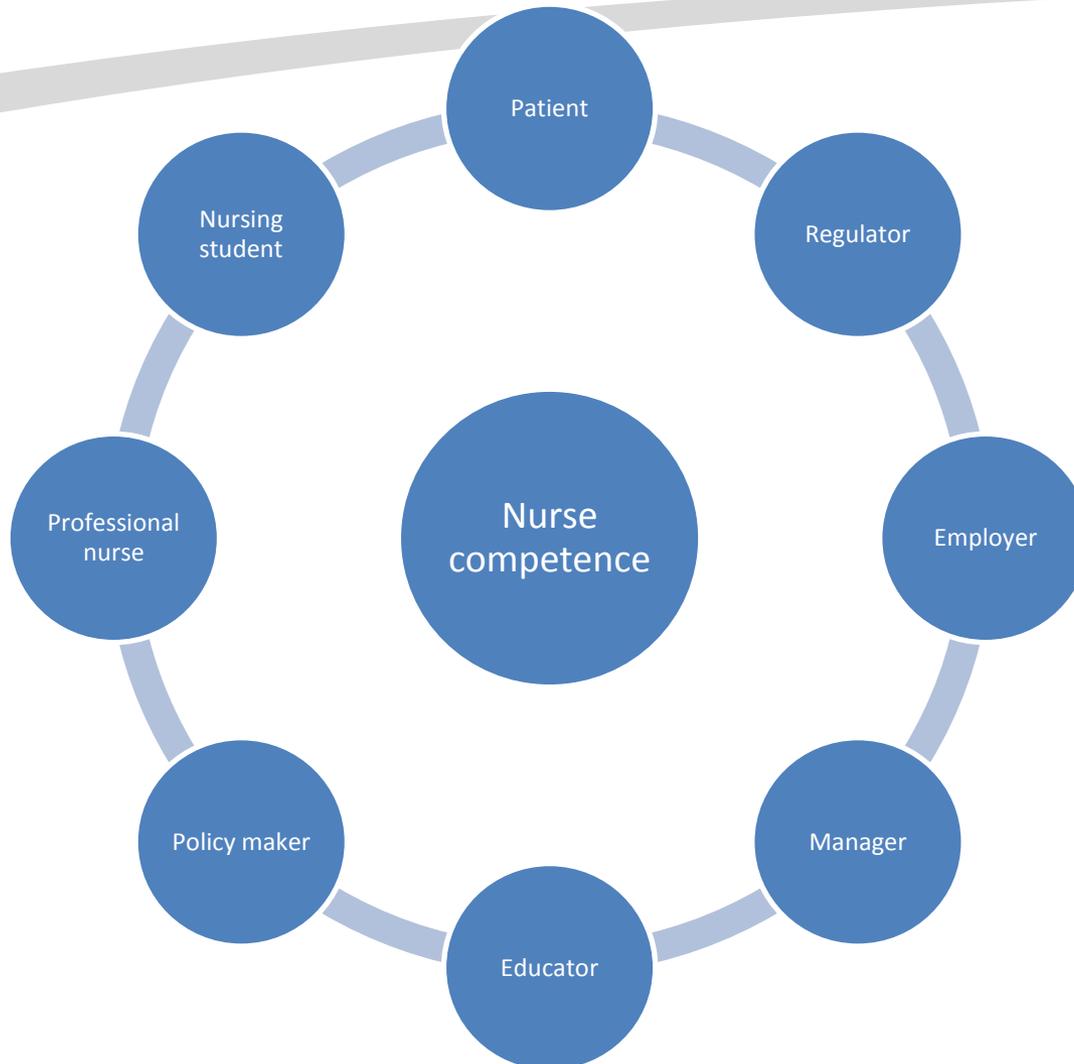


Clarifying the concept of nurse competence

(Smith, 2012)



Different perspectives on nurse competence



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Research questions already
explored in this field



Research questions already explored in this field

- Define
- Identify
- Assess
- Develop
- Maintain





Research questions already explored in this field

- Define
- Identify
- Assess
- Develop
- Maintain
- Phenomenological studies
- Concept development and operationalization
- Concept analysis
- Theory development



Research questions already explored in this field

- Define
- Identify
- Assess
- Develop
- Maintain
- Needs assessment
- Competency framework development



Research questions already explored in this field

- Define
 - Identify
 - **Assess**
 - Develop
 - Maintain
- Indicators identification
 - Self assessment versus hetero-assessment
 - Instrument development and validation
 - Assessment of competence in nursing education
 - Assessment of competence at entry into practice
 - Assessment of competence in LLL
 - Exploring and contrasting assessments made from different perspectives



Research questions already explored in this field

- Define
- Identify
- Assess
- Develop
- Maintain
- Interventions to promote competence development nursing education



Research questions already explored in this field

- Define
- Identify
- Assess
- Develop
- Maintain
- Interventions to promote competence in life long learning

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Limitations identified in the knowledge already produced

Limitations identified in the knowledge already produced

- Nurse competence: « *A nebulous concept* »

(Garside, 2011)

- Confusion about

- Its definition
- Level of abstraction
- How it should be assessed
- How it should be implemented
- Which competence does a nurse need



(Blazun & al, 2015)

We need to increase
the level of evidence
available



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What could be the agenda
for nurse researchers?

« Defining criteria for nursing competence would be a major issue for the 21st century »

(Bradshaw, 2000)

« Much more research is needed into the field of nurse competence »

(Smith, 2012)



What could be the agenda for nurse researchers?

- Theory generation
- Complex intervention development and testing (including new technologies)
- Implementation of the knowledge produced about nurse competence into practice, education and management
- Meta-synthesis
- Instruments development
- Experimental studies

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