

Nursing profession driving change through research and technological developments

By [Dr Sharon Vasuthevan](#)

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As the healthcare industry, we are dealing with a myriad of challenges when it relates to nurses, the most imminent of those is the aging nursing population. According to the South African Nursing Council (SANC) website, 75% of registered nurses/midwives are over the age of 40, with the majority between the ages of 50 and 59. The aging population poses a risk for the future of the South African healthcare system. It's the responsibility of both the private and public sector to limit the potential skill shortage and ensure new talent is attracted through effective educational institutions.



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Life College of Learning is registered as a Private Higher Education Institution which not only contributes to the development and empowerment of many South Africans, but also assists in alleviating the national healthcare skills shortage with a specific focus on nursing. With dedicated staff and students, we aim to create a skilled workforce for the healthcare industry in order to provide cost-effective, quality and competent patient care. The students have the unique benefit of learning in our world-class hospital facilities under the supervision of our clinical experts.

A focus on research

Nursing has a proud history as a scientific, evidence-based profession. At Life Healthcare, we have created an environment which promotes research, to drive development and innovation in the industry.

All nursing students registered at the college are expected to conduct research and take part in research projects. This practice has improved the knowledge and skills of students and nurse educators alike. Every project touches on an essential part of service delivery to our patients. The students' research aspects of quality, safe nursing practices, community outreach programmes, and peer-group mentoring, to name just a few.

In 2011, Life Healthcare established a Research and Scientific Committee, which in 2015 was registered with the National Health Research and Ethics Committee. The main role of the committee is to ensure the protection of the company, employees, and patients during any research study conducted within the Life Healthcare Group. As a result of prioritising research, 168 research requests were submitted to the Research and Scientific Committee between 2011 and 2016 with 146 of these requests being approved.



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Advanced electronic learning

Not only has the focus on research resulted in increased competence within the nursing group but with the world becoming digital, the rapid introduction of educational technology means that our nurses are empowered and able to compete on a global scale.

The 21st century is marked by access to an abundance of information, rapid changes in technological tools and the ability to collaborate and communicate on an unprecedented scale. Healthcare is also gradually going digital, with the industry leaning more and more to Big Data and the Internet of Things to advance the industry.

At Life College of Learning, we have obtained an advanced electronic learning programme that is conducive to learning and self-study as it is visual and interactive. The programme is a 3D human anatomy and physiology software for teaching, learning and presenting. It provides the educator with a versatile teaching resource which includes case studies, knowledge testing and videos of diseases related to the body systems.

Life Healthcare is working hard to rapidly respond to an ever-changing world, especially concerning healthcare delivery in South Africa, highlighting a competency for creativity and innovation to ultimately bring about positive change.

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