

# Media Visibility of Nursing in Portugal: analysis of health-related news in online media



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## Introduction

**Nursing is a central profession in health care**, which prevents complications, reduces mortality and decreases charges in the healthcare sector (Gordon & Nelson: 2006; Doran: 2011; Schubert et al.: 2012). However, the literature reveals an absence of social recognition and low media visibility (Kemmer & Silva: 2007; Summers & Summers: 2009; Baggio & Erdmann: 2010). The **disavowal of society about nursing roles** and nursing care may generate disinvestment in the profession, which may bring **adverse consequences to citizen's health** (Buresh & Gordon, 2006: Gordon & Nelson, 2006: Cohen & Bartholomew: 2008). The current research aimed to **describe nursing visibility in the Portuguese media based on an analysis of the informative health news from the Internet**.

## Tables

**Table 1:** Theme of the news piece

Theme of the news piece	n	%
Health and economic policy	542	57,3
Scientific research	174	18,4
Public health	84	8,9
Professional development	72	7,6
Others (education, quality...)	74	7,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2:** IS Profession

Information Source (IS) profession	n	%
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	229	22,5
Politician	217	21,3
No profession references found	193	19,0
Researcher	94	9,2
Manager	85	8,4
<b>Nurse (RN)</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>6,6</b>
Pharmaceutical Professionals	51	5,0
Other non-health professionals	44	4,3
Other health professionals	32	3,2
Journalist	5	0,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>1017*</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Some news included more than one IS

**Table 3:** Number of IS per nursing-related news

	n	$\bar{x}$	s
<b>Number of IS per news</b>	86	1,41	0,64

**Table 4:** Number of nursing-related news per day

	n	$\bar{x}$	s
<b>Number of news per day</b>	61	3,59	2,40

## Results

The nurses constituted information sources in **6.6%** of the cases, which suggests **low media visibility**. Health-related news are characterized by news production routines based on **little variety** of information sources, and by **official** and **male information sources**. These news were also focused on economic and political health issues.

Nursing-related news appears to be influenced by news production routines. The latter provide a **"problem discourse"** related to protests and employment issues, **instead of focusing on investigation and nursing care**.

## Method

This is a descriptive and documentary research. 1271 health-related news were collected during September and October of the year 2011 (946 portuguese online news and 325 from the Portuguese Nursing Board press review). During that period, the websites of 2 radio stations, 3 television information channels, 3 newspapers (1 daily, 1 weekly, and 1 free daily newspaper) and one information weekly magazine were searched for health-related news.

Regarding the **online news**, a statistical analysis was done to the following variables:  
-Theme of the news piece;  
-Information Source (IS) profession.

Regarding the **nursing-related online news**, the following variables were analyzed:  
-Type of media (TV, Radio, Newspapers/Magazine);  
-IS gender;  
-Authorship of the news piece;  
-Number of IS per nursing-related news pieces;  
-Number of nursing-related news pieces per day.

## Conclusion

Nursing media visibility in online media appears to be low. It is suggested that **nurses should develop public communication skills** to interact with the media and to publicize the relevance of the profession towards society.

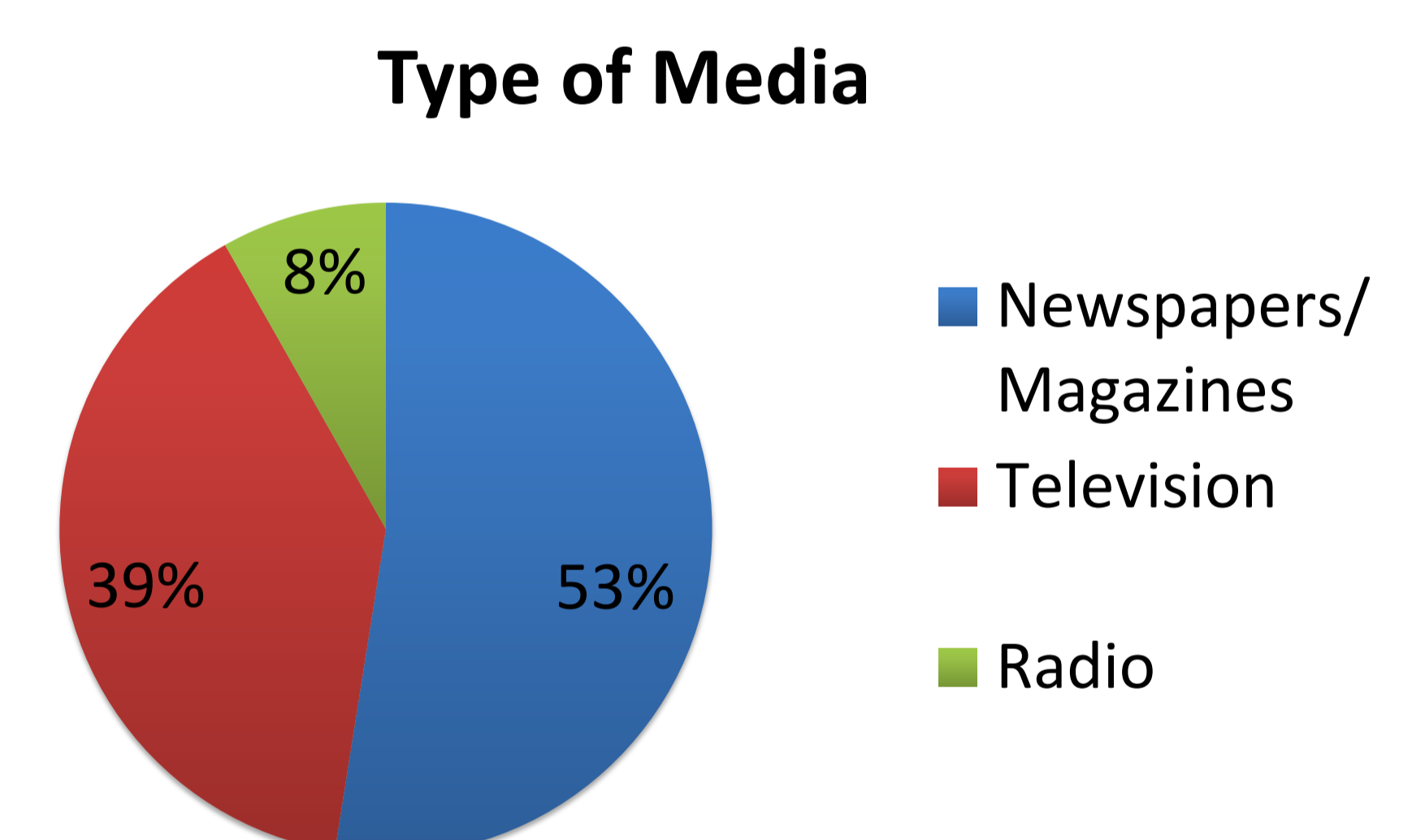
**Strengthening research** in this area and **incorporating public communication skills in postgraduate nursing courses** may contribute to an increased social recognition of nursing.

**Further research** should address:

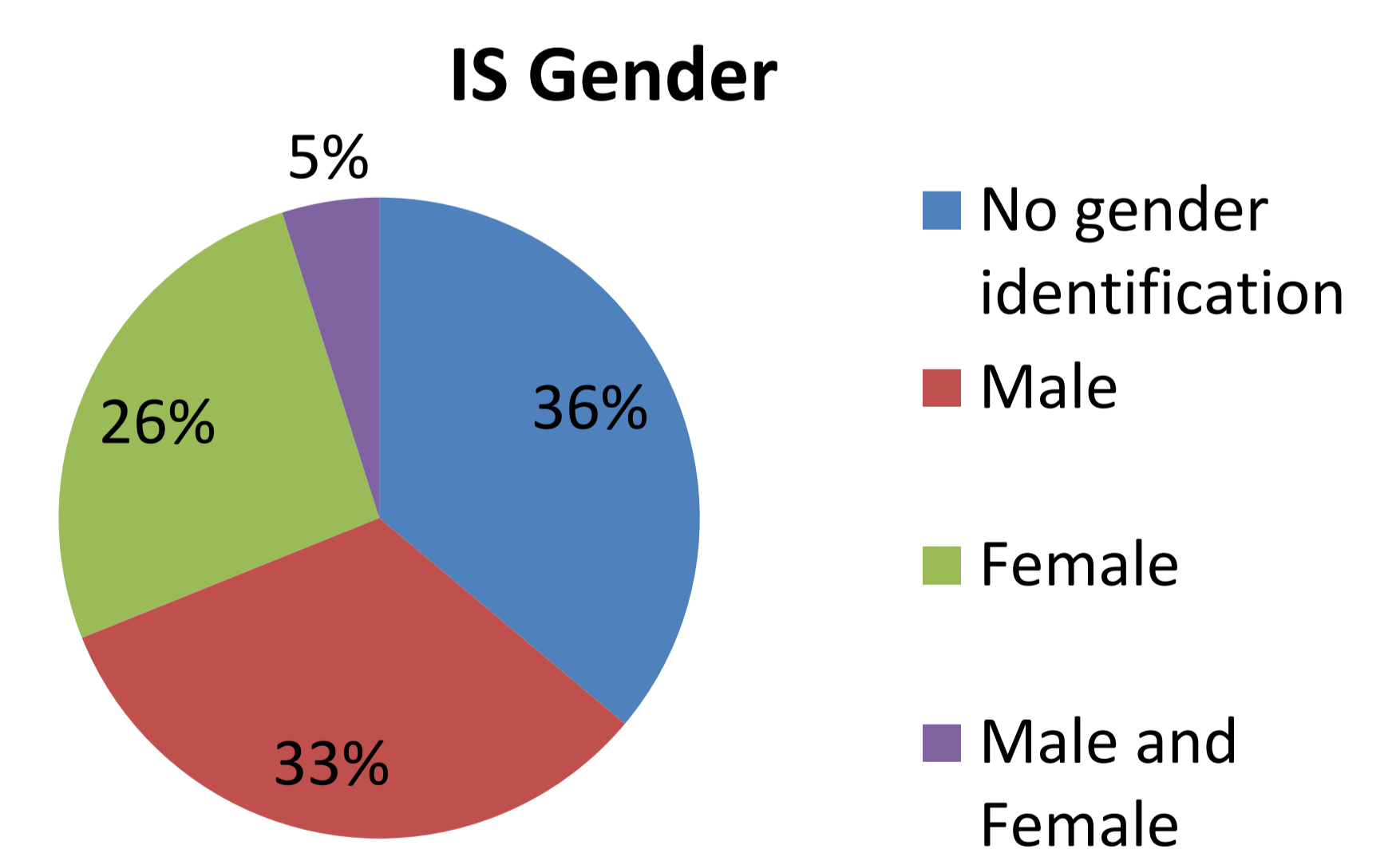
- Nurses perceptions of media relations and public communication skills;
- Journalists perceptions of nursing roles and contributes to healthcare;
- Effectiveness of a Media Relations Course to nurses.

## Graphics

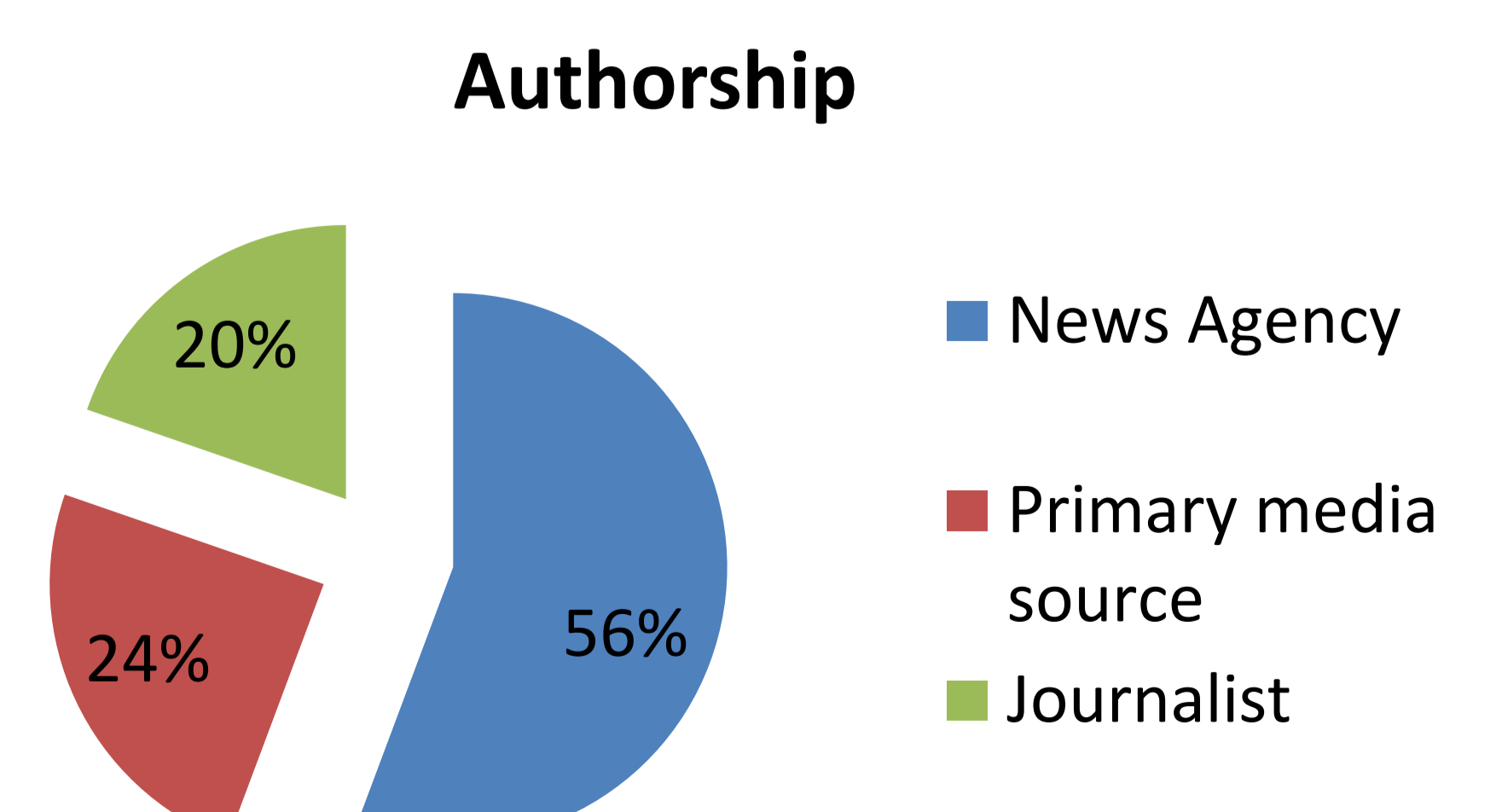
**Graphic 1:** Type of news media in nursing-related news



**Graphic 2:** Information Source Gender in nursing-related news



**Graphic 3:** Authorship of the nursing-related news piece



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