

The Role of International Organisations in the Development of Public Health Nursing, 1933–1974

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Summary

This paper analyses the contribution made by the League of Nations (LoN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to the development of public health nursing, and the role of nursing experts working in these and other organisations.

The sources consulted included documentation on public health nursing held in the LoN archives and technical reports drawn up by expert committees on nursing and related fields held in the WHO database.

In the 1920s, international organisations began seeking to meet the need for public health nurses who could implement community-based interventions, deploying various strategies to achieve this goal over the course of the 20th century.

The work of nursing experts on the LoN Hygiene Committee and WHO Advisory Committees underpinned systematic efforts to establish appropriate training in public health nursing and to organise effective nursing services in Europe. The role they played reveals changing attitudes towards the contribution of public health nursing.

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