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CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM OF THE MAIN INTEGRATIVE DISCIPLINE NURSING

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Nursing is the main integrative discipline of this major, where some transformations are evident that respond to the requirements of the “D” Study Plan. Despite this, there are still difficulties in certain components of the program that need to be improved.

Objective: To assess the potentialities and deficiencies in certain components of the syllabus of Nursing as the main integrative discipline, for the improvement of the major curriculum.

Methods: A narrative bibliographic review was carried out, including several texts, articles, as well as printed and digital materials related to the syllabuses of the main integrative discipline in higher education, in medical education, and particularly, in the Nursing major. The databases and directories of SciELO, Lilacs, Latindex, Medline, and Scopus were consulted, using the following keywords in Spanish and Boolean operators to expand the results: Nursing[nursing], integrative major discipline[main integrative discipline], Nursing study plan[Nursing curriculum], and discipline program[discipline syllabus]. Seventeen original and review articles, either national or international, published between 2015 and 2020 were selected.

Conclusions: The analysis of the main integrative discipline of Nursing allowed identifying deficiencies in the educational and instructional objectives, the skills system, the curricular strategies, and the skills card, as well as making proposals for syllabus improvement, which contributed to the formation of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing capable of providing nursing care to the individual, the family, and the community about the environment based on their needs, through the application of the nursing care process.

KEYWORDS: Nursing, Integrative Discipline, Curriculum Improvement, Syllabus Assessment
Educational Objectives, Instructional Objectives, Skills System, Curricular Strategies, Medical Education, Nursing Care Process.

INTRODUCTION:

“We live in the era of information abundance, technologies, and great changes. We find ourselves in a society that advances at the pace of scientific and communication development, a society that constantly reinvents itself. Keeping up with the pace demands competent professionals, and requires reforms in the teaching systems and teaching procedures of Cuban universities.” The improvement that has taken place in Higher Education in Cuba has forced the methodological work to be resized based on the new generation of study plans and discipline programs (Stunden, Ginige, et al. 2024). That is to say, a new type of teaching discipline is manifested that is projected differently, according to the relationships established in its structure. In the improvement of the instructional processes of higher education, changes are noted in terms of the structuring of the study plans and, consequently, in the disciplines that comprise them. These mark different periods depending on the career under analysis. The training of the Nursing graduate, in particular, has been the subject of this sustained process of changes, which has led to it contributing to the achievement of indicators that guarantee the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Health System (Dissanayake, Dharmasena, et al. 2024). From 1981 to 1990, different study plans were in force for the Middle Technician in Nursing, adjusted to the entry-level of the students and the technical-professional exit profile, so only the three-year study plan remained in force. with entry from 12th grade and an exit profile in General Nursing. In 1976, the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing for practising nurses emerged, which was later extended, with the particularities of the regular day course (CRD), to students from pre-university without prior nursing studies. At the beginning of the century, Both modalities coexist with regular day courses (CRD) and courses for workers (CPT) (Wadagni, Yao et al. 2024). Current social conditions demand from the medical university a change in the training process for nurses, based on a flexible conception that first satisfies the shortcomings and growing needs of this member of the work team, in the different teaching-care units. In 2003, a new curricular design was proposed for the training of human resources in nursing, which integrated the technical and university levels with three levels of training and two intermediate outputs: Basic Nurse (Wising, Ström et al. 2024), Technical Nurse and Graduate in Nursing, which was developed in all educational centres in the country. A year later, a partial improvement of this was carried out, which served as the basis for subsequent transformations that have had as their guiding axis the

guidelines of the D study plans, which differ from the previous ones by the flexibility of the Flexnerian model, the introduction of different curricular strategies and coherent interdisciplinary coordination (Holthuis 2024). The conception of Plan D responds to the internationally accepted modern methodology for learning and has been established by the Ministry of Higher Education (MES) since 2003. The medical sciences careers were designed with the methodological regulations of plans D: Nursing (2004), Technologies (2009), and Stomatology (2011). The D plans, heirs of the C, come to continue the curricular improvement of higher education in Cuba, and they also adjust to the new paradigms of contemporary medical education (Adams, Komene, et al. 2024). This model is characterized by an early employment connection of the student, since it begins along with the career, through on-the-job education activities, in the three-year in-person training period to qualify as a technical nurse; Once you graduate from that level, your training continues in a blended mode, which gives continuity to your studies, at the same time you have a job in an institution of the National Health System as a technical nurse (Wright, Butt, et al. 2024). The uniqueness of this model, which differentiates it from the previous ones, is that during the fourth year of the degree, the training program of the main integrative discipline is carried out in the inter-meeting period, in real work scenarios, with the participation of a teaching figure who acquires in this model a relevant role for the education and instruction of students: the tutor (Glarcher and Vaismoradi 2024). The analysis of the program of a discipline must be carried out by the provisions of the Teaching and Methodological Work Regulations, Resolution No. 2/2018, which establishes in its Chapter II Methodological Work, Fourth Section, article 78, the information that a program must contain. analytical of the discipline. This information refers to preliminary data and substantiation of the discipline; general objectives; contents: essential knowledge to acquire, main skills to train, fundamental values to which it adheres; general methodological indicators for your organization; and bibliography (Antonelli, Poza, et al. 2024)

Table 1: Overview of Higher Education and Nursing Training in Cuba

Period	Description
Pre-2000s	Evolution of study plans for Nursing from 1981 to 1990, introduction of the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing in 1976 (Wadagni, Yao, et al. 2024).
The early	Coexistence of regular day courses (CRD) and courses for workers (CPT), with the

2000s	demand for a change in the training process for nurses (Wadagni, Yao, et al. 2024).
2003	Proposal of a new curricular design integrating technical and university levels with three training levels and two intermediate outputs: Basic Nurse, Technical Nurse, and Graduate in Nursing (Wising, Ström, et al. 2024).
2004	Implementation of Plan D for Nursing, focusing on flexible learning methodologies and early employment connections (Holthuis 2024; Adams, Komene, et al. 2024).
Post-2004	Continuation of curricular improvements, emphasizing modern paradigms of medical education and integration of on-the-job education activities (Wright, Butt, et al. 2024).

Table 2: Study Plans and Curricular Design

Plan	Description
Plan D	Introduced in 2003, characterized by flexibility, curricular strategies, and interdisciplinary coordination (Holthuis 2024).
D Study Plans	Designed for medical sciences careers, emphasizing flexibility, curricular strategies, and early employment connections (Adams, Komene, et al. 2024).
Bachelor's Degree in Nursing	Main integrating discipline with potentialities and deficiencies in the program components, aiming for curriculum improvement (Antonelli, Poza, et al. 2024; Zhang, Wang, et al. 2024).

Table 3: Key Components and Changes in Nursing Education

Component	Description
Methodological Work	Resized based on new generation study plans and discipline programs (Stunden, Ginige, et al. 2024).
Curricular Design	Proposal of new curricular design integrating technical and university levels with three training levels (Wising, Ström, et al. 2024).
Early Employment Connection	Students begin on-the-job education activities along with their careers, followed by blended training modes (Wright, Butt, et al. 2024).

Tutor's Role	Tutors play a relevant role in the education and instruction of students during the fourth year of the degree in real work scenarios (Glarcher and Vaismoradi 2024).
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Table 4: Regulatory and Methodological Framework

Regulation	Description
Teaching and Methodological Work Regulations	Establishes the information that a program must contain, including preliminary data, general objectives, essential knowledge, main skills, and bibliography (Antonelli, Poza, et al. 2024).
Resolution No. 2/2018	Defines the provisions for the analysis of a discipline program, focusing on methodological indicators and organization (Antonelli, Poza, et al. 2024).

Nursing is the main integrating discipline of the Bachelor's Degree in Nursing, where characteristics of plan D are evident. Despite this, when carrying out an analysis of the program, potentialities and deficiencies are seen in certain components of the program that need to be perfected to achieve quality teaching in the career. The objective of this research was to assess the potential and deficiencies in certain components of the program of the main integrative discipline (DPI) Nursing for the improvement of the curriculum of the Bachelor's degree in Nursing (Zhang, Wang, et al. 2024).

Methods:

A narrative bibliographic review was carried out, which included various texts, articles, and printed and digital materials related to the programs of the disciplines and the main integrative discipline in Higher Education, Medical Education, and, particularly, in the Nursing career during 2019. The databases were consulted. SciELO data and directories, Lilacs, Latindex, Medline, and Scopus, using the keywords in Spanish and Boolean operators, to expand the results of the research: “Nursing”, “Main integrative discipline”, “Nursing study plan” and “ Discipline program.” The following filters were applied (Dürsch, Boltenhagen et al. 2024):

Limit: Discipline

Language: Spanish and English

Publication year: 2015-2020

Document type: original articles and bibliographic reviews

The inclusion criteria for the selection of the articles were: articles available in the selected data portals that are related to the programs of the discipline and the main integrative discipline. Letters to the editor and duplicate articles were excluded. The search result showed a total of 46 articles distributed by database as shown in the figure. After reading the titles, 30 articles were excluded because they were not relevant to the research objectives, for a total of 16 articles referenced in this study (Leclerc-Loiselle, Gendron et al. 2024). The information was processed through a detailed reading of the included articles and document analysis. Experts in career and in Pedagogy who worked at the university, and in the training settings of the primary level (APS) and the secondary level, were consulted (Hakkarainen, Salminen et al. 2024).

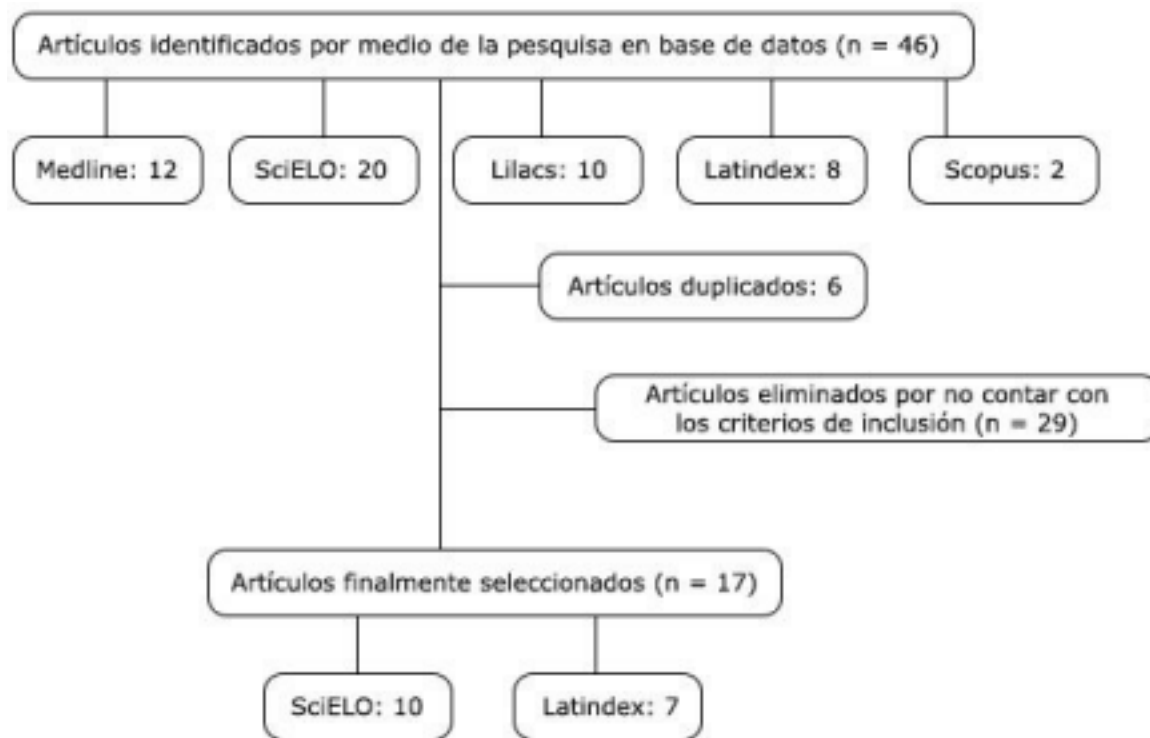


Fig. -

Flowchart of selection stages of the integrative literature review.

Analysis and integration of information

In the critical evaluation of the Nursing discipline program, the indications given by the MES for the higher teaching category exercises were assumed, and a logic was proposed to follow to evaluate, with a critical approach, the didactic-methodological design of the Nursing discipline program. Discipline that is criticized, taking into account the relationships established

between the professional model, professional problems, objectives, contents, forms of organization, evaluation, methodological guidelines for the treatment of the three components of the career, and the continuity in the postgraduate course (Chang, Jen, et al. 2024). This logic is based on taking into account the trilogy of achievements, deficiencies, and proposals for improvement. The DPI Nursing is part of the study plan for the Bachelor of Nursing degree in the daytime course, which covers from the first to the fifth year of the degree, with a total of 4,140 hours. The program was developed in the 2011-2012 academic year. The educational and instructive objectives of the program do not present deficiencies, they are general and integrate all the subjects of the discipline (Papathanassoglou, Park, et al. 2024); However, the author considers that they should appear integrated into a training objective. This is justified by assuming the training model of Cuban education with a broad profile, based on two guiding ideas: the unity between education and instruction, which expresses the need to educate man at the same time as instructing him; and the link between study and work (Westman, Johnson, et al. 2024),

which consists of ensuring mastery of professional modes of action through the curriculum, in direct connection with their professional activity (Chapter I Generalities, article 3 of RM 2/2018). Despite this, the discipline and subject programs continue to come with separate objectives: on the one hand, the instructive and, on the other, the educational. Below is an example of the proposal to improve a training objective that integrates the educational and instructive (Salimi-Bani, Pandian et al. 2024).

- Explain the theoretical-practical foundations that support the work methods, techniques, and procedures, through the use of the dialectical historical and humanistic materialist approach used in the care of healthy people (elderly, children, women, and adults), sick or with limited vital processes, the family and the community, by using the theoretical conceptions of the Nursing Care Process (PAE) in the study situations related to the most common conditions, risks, emergencies, disasters, considerations ethics and bioethics, and medicine traditional and natural, through the application of scientific methodology corresponding to the various functions assumed in professional performance (Peršolja, Žvanut et al. 2024).
- The contents are made up of the ten subjects that make up the discipline Fundamentals of Nursing I and II, Medical-Surgical Nursing I and II, Gynecobstetric Nursing, Pediatric Nursing, Emergency Nursing, Mental Health Nursing, Primary Health Care Nursing and Pre-professional

Practice. There is no correspondence between the system of essential knowledge and the basic skills to be developed that constitute a guide for the subject programs. Table 1 shows an example of how it could be written (Zhang, Liu et al. 2024).

Table 1 - Example of correspondence between the knowledge system and basic skills

Essential knowledge system	Basic abilities
The strategies, methods, techniques and work procedures of the profession at different levels of health care.	-Apply the strategies, methods, techniques and work procedures of the profession at different levels of health care to satisfy the basic needs of the person, family and community. -Evaluate the strategies, methods, techniques and work procedures of the profession at different levels of health care.

-Apply the strategies, methods, techniques, and work procedures of the profession at different levels of health care to satisfy the basic needs of the person, family, and community.

-Evaluate the strategies, methods, techniques, and work procedures of the profession at different levels of health care.

In the program, a table appears where the ten subjects of the discipline are related to the total weeks and contact hours of each of them. However, the total hours of other educational organizational forms such as independent work and extracurricular work are not included. Furthermore, the hours of nursing shifts are not distributed; Your orientation is declared at the end of the program (Mikhridinova, Wolff, et al. 2024).

Next, some particularities of the discipline in the academic years are declared, the general objectives are specified (some appear written with more than one intellectual ability), and the system of knowledge and skills. Next, the interweaving of curricular strategies in the different subjects that make up the discipline is explained; namely, the following (Yu, Xu et al. 2024):

– Development of professional personality: ethics in the Nursing professional (main career strategy)

- Traditional and Natural Medicine
- Senior Adult
- Nutrition
- Research-labor training and permanent knowledge management– English language learning
- Public health
- Medical geography and environment
- Comprehensive Addiction Care
- Human sexuality
- Interpersonal and pedagogical communication
- Administrative, economic, and legal training
- Genetics

The objectives of each strategy and how the subjects should participate appear in the program annexes. This aspect must be evident and made explicit in each analytical program of the discipline's subjects. Subsequently, the fundamental teaching organizational forms are presented, which include education at work and nursing duty, although the latter is not included in the total contact hours that appear in the table for each subject. That is, the hours allocated to this type of activity are not included in those assumed from the total face-to-face hours for Workplace Education (Martzoukou, Luders, et al. 2024).

Teaching methods are declared with emphasis on active methods of joint development and independent work, and modeling for the implementation of techniques. It is considered necessary to include the proposal of problematic methods in any of their modalities: heuristic conversation, exposition problem, partial search, and investigative method, due to the advantages that it offers to students for the construction of their knowledge (Hikmat, Suryani, et al. 2024).

The proposal of the teaching aids is appropriate depending on the subject of the discipline that is taught, although it is outdated in terms of the years of publication and the new books that have been published, in response to the technological development achieved with the presentation of *power Point*, *software*, multimedia, etc. It is proposed to emphasize that, given the potential of information and communications technologies depending on training (Li, Lv et al. 2024),

in those teaching scenarios where there is an intranet with virtual classrooms on the Moodle platform, teachers must prepare presentations in *Point* and other materials, and place

them in the virtual classroom for students to consult. RM 2/2018 in Chapter III Teaching Work, article 154, declares: "In all organizational forms of the educational teaching process, the teacher must use teaching methods and means that guarantee the active participation of students [...]; "Information and communication technologies must have an important use in the development of teaching work (Milani, Saiani, et al. 2024)."

Furthermore, it is suggested to include the individual, the family, the community, and the environment as important learning resources for the development of the discipline. The evaluation system proposed by the Nursing discipline for the subjects will be frequent, partial, and final, as regulated in Chapter IV Learning evaluation of articles 162-172 of RM 2/2018. Frequent evaluation will be carried out through participation in teaching activities, including workshop class, oral or written questions, delivery and receipt of people in your care, visit pass, presentation, and discussion of cases, nursing guards, and other forms. Teaching (Gabriel, Clark et al. 2024).

These evaluations will be recorded in the control and evaluation document enabled for this purpose. The partial evaluation includes participation in seminars; the performance, presentation, and discussion of assigned cases; and the delivery of extra-class work. The final evaluation of all subjects has a final evaluation act. In the case of the subjects of this discipline, except Nursing Administration and Management in Nursing Services, the final evaluation includes the practical exam and the theoretical exam. No student will be able to do the latter without having satisfactorily passed the practical (Herrera and Pearce 2024).

It is suggested to introduce the orientation of evaluative cuts into the discipline program depending on the time fund of each subject. This response to what is written in Chapter II Methodological Work of the resolution mentioned, which refers to the three evaluative cuts that must be made: the first, in the middle of the semester – if it is a first-year subject it is proposed in the fourth week; the second, at the end of the subject with the ordinary exam; and the third, once the extraordinary examination period has concluded (Gaudreau, Guillaume, et al. 2024).

Likewise, it must be specified that the final grade will not only be given by a comprehensive evaluation that includes the results of frequent, partial, and final evaluations, but also by the fulfilment of educational objectives such as the development of values, formal education, the use of uniform and compliance with ethical principles. The orientation of teaching literature refers to basic, complementary, and reference texts, which, in some cases, are not

adequate or meet the criteria of the Vancouver standards, and are outdated in terms of the edition and updating of texts (Igbinenikaro, Adekoya et al. 2024).

The program has several annexes, including the teaching algorithm: assessment, intervention, and evaluation, the NANDA 2006 nursing diagnoses – which must be updated – and the regulations for nursing observation. It is suggested that a standard skills card should appear to serve as a guide for the subjects since the professional skills cards of the subjects in most cases only refer to those that respond to the care function and not to the investigative, managerial, and teaching, which is relevant to the modes of professional action of the Nursing graduate and in correspondence with what is declared in the discipline and study plan D (Table 2) (Waterworth, Smith et al. 2024).

Table 2- Proposal of specific skills and functions to be developed by the student in the main integrative discipline of Nursing

1 Participate in the planning of interdisciplinary and intersectoral actions at different levels of health care.					
2 Participate in administrative and scientific nursing techniques.					
3 Direct the nursing team in the different services.					

[illegible]

	patients and the newborn.												
2	Collaborate in all stages of clinical trials in pregnant women, postpartum women, gynaecological patients and the newborn.												
3	Design techniques and instruments, apply them, process and analyze information qualitatively and quantitatively, and present it in tables and graphs.												

Of all the disciplines of a career, the Cuban university identifies one in particular that, due to its importance, is the backbone of the training process: the main integrative discipline. This turns out *of its kind*, since, far from obeying the logic of one or several sciences, it responds to that of the profession. It relies on the contributions of the remaining disciplines of the career and assumes them in their integration to respond to the demands of the professional task, thereby ensuring mastery of the essential modes of action of that professional (Stray, Wibe, et al. 2024).

Its fundamental content is investigative labour, it integrates all the work activities carried out by the students, as well as the student's scientific works. This is how it has been conceived in most races, but this does not mean that the problem of its design is completely solved. On the contrary, given its novelty and pedagogical complexity, Cuban higher education works to improve it. This discipline, due to its peculiarities, offers possibilities for the development of these qualities in students, since it is carried out in direct contact with professional work (Luk and Chan 2024).

Precisely there, in the context of their work activity, appropriate behaviour can be evidenced. Therefore, the educational role of the discipline is essential for the career. For this reason, and due to its high complexity, it should be taught by teachers with the most experience and mastery of the profession. The study plan for the graduate in Nursing assumes the position increasingly shared by various authors about the need for an integrative approach in the

curriculum, both in the design and in the process, as well as the application of learning strategies focused on the student (Seibert, Akkermans, et al. 2024).

In Latin America, although progress was made in the first three decades of the century, the trend is focused on “the development of nursing competencies based on the acquisition of new scientific knowledge, the development of skills and abilities that make it easier for professionals to adapt to change, and respond to the needs and expectations of the population. Likewise, the development of nursing did not occur homogeneously in the region. Different levels of training vary between countries and sometimes within them. Normally three categories are observed: professional, technical or basic intermediate exit, and nursing assistant (Lehman and Moriarty 2024).

Currently, the training of nurses has expanded its profile from healthcare to administrative, due to the high demand for health professionals to manage an establishment that requires it, without leaving aside postgraduate preparation, which requires continuing improvement. There is the challenge of humanized care on the part of this professional, which does not only involve carrying out a correct procedure, based on scientific bases but also the execution of transpersonal actions towards the individual and their community environment (Bird, Harper et al. 2024).

The university curriculum in its management must be conceived as a conscious and scientifically argued process that can lead to other training with greater impact, to fulfill the mission of Higher Education Institutions. The improvement of the training process in universities is based on scientific didactics for curriculum management, from its planning to the work of pedagogical groups (Nyante, Benneh Mensah, et al. 2024).

Borges-Damas and others specify the need for continuous and systematic reflection in subject groups, to seek the most viable path for the development of programs in new training contexts, and to contribute to the achievement of high professional competence. The author of the research reaffirms what was expressed by other authors, by declaring that the successive curricular improvements in the subjects that currently make up the DPI allowed a gradual approach to the formation of the professional axis that characterizes the D and E study plans (Guo, Deng et al. 2024).

The percentage of hours dedicated to education at work is high and with a tendency to increase, which shows the need to achieve a growing theoretical-practical and basic-clinical

integration within this teaching organizational form, which guarantees the scientific, technological, and humanistic nature of the training, the only guarantee of the high level of professional competence of graduates (Demorest, Cook et al. 2024).

Conclusions

Among the main achievements of the program of the main integrative discipline of Nursing and in response to study plan D, greater flexibility can be seen; greater essentiality of the contents of the disciplines and subjects; strengthening of socio-humanist training; multi- and interdisciplinarity of curricular strategies; harmonious correspondence of scientific training and the training of professional skills; expansion of the concept “basic training”: “specific basic training” and “general basic training”; increasing reduction of face-to-face activities; and a more qualitative and integrative evaluation system.

The identified deficiencies and the proposals made contribute in a positive way to the improvement of the program of the main integrative discipline intending to train a comprehensive nurse capable of providing nursing care to the individual, the family, and the community about the environment and in response to their needs through the application of the Nursing Care Process.

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