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Altri autori (Persone)	AckroydStephen BoltonSharon C
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Sommario/riassunto	This special edition of the IJPSM is primarily concerned with the contemporary role of the hospital nurse and the effects that new management arrangements are having (and are not having) on their work and ability to provide effective care. Given the controversy that surrounds the provision of health care in Britain and elsewhere, the contribution of this special issue is timely, and we think it offers many insights into current issues.