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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND BURNOUT AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT The present study was intended to assess the emotional intelligence and burnout among BSc Nursing students. The objectives of the study were to assess the emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students and to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout. The design adopted was descriptive design and purposive sampling technique was employed. Sample consisted of 95 BSc Nursing students. Data was collected using Schutte Emotional Intelligence scale and Burnout Inventory. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics. The result revealed that the mean total score of emotional intelligence was 128.33 (SD=13.12) and it was 77.5% of the maximum score (165). Mean score of burnout was 28.74 (SD=4.48). Statistically significant association was found between emotional intelligence and demographic variables such as year of study, previous academic achievement and extracurricular activities. The study revealed a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students (r= -0.322, p=0.001).

"Today's students are tomorrow's professionals"

Nurses are inevitable part of healthcare delivery system and they should work in cooperation with other healthcare members to deliver a quality healthcare. Emotions play an important role in any profession which requires not only the technical expertise but also psychological oriented care, knowledge and perception about one's emotions and emotions of others play a crucial role in further development and growth of the profession.

Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence is a crucial component which helps an individual to recognize the need of oneself and others self which further promotes successful performance in day to day life. Only an emotionally intelligent nurse can work in harmony with her thoughts and feelings and also with that of others.

Burnout is a syndrome made up of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment. Burnout can lead to de-motivation and disengagement which can lead to decreased productivity in day to day life.

Nursing is a stressful profession which requires immense adjustment to various unfamiliar situations. So the nursing education should foster the development of physically and mentally healthy students in order to promote strong foundation of a great nation tomorrow.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Projections 2010-2020 it is expected that numbers of employed nurses will grow from 2.74 million in 2010 to 3.4 million in 2020 that is an increase of 712000 new nurses and the registered nursing workforce is the top occupation in terms of job growth through 2020. So todays nursing education should cater the development of emotionally intelligent nurses that is necessary to cope with stress related to excessive workload and burden from clinical practices.

A descriptive study was done to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among 148 healthcare professionals. Self-report emotional intelligence test and link burnout questionnaire were used to assess emotional intelligence and burnout respectively. The study results showed that there was a negative correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout syndrome (r=-0.342, p<0.01).

Furthermore the integration of emotional intelligence in nursing education may promote better emotional regulation which in turn contributes to high level of performance and improved quality nursing care outcomes of nursing students.

OBJECTIVES
- Assess the emotional intelligence among nursing students
- Assess burnout among nursing students.
- Determine the correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students
- Determine the association between emotional intelligence among nursing students and selected socio demographic variables.
- Determine the association between burnout among nursing students and selected socio demographic variable.

MATERIALS AND METHODS
This study was conducted in College of nursing, Ananthapuri Hospitals and Research Institute, Chackai, Thiruvananthapuram. Sample comprised of 95 BSc nursing students (47 first year and 48 second year students). Purposive sampling technique was adopted. Data were collected using self-report method.

Tools used for data collection were questionnaire to assess socio-demographic variables, Schutte Emotional Intelligence scale and Burnout Inventory. Schutte Emotional Intelligence scale is a 33 item self-report inventory focusing on emotional intelligence. The emotional intelligence scale has 4 subscales (perception of emotions, managing own emotions, managing other's emotions and utilization of emotions). Respondents rate themselves on the items using a 5 point Likert scale. Score can range from 33 to 165, with higher score indicating more characteristic emotional intelligence. Burnout inventory consists of 30 items, which is a 4 point scale, self-reporting inventory. This burnout assessment questionnaire consists of 3 subscales physical exhaustion, emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. Each subscale score ranges from 0 to 30 with higher scores indicating higher level of burnout.

Data collection was done after obtaining formal administrative approval. After getting informed consent, explanation regarding the study was given, questionnaires were distributed among the first year and second year BSc nursing students, who met the inclusion criteria. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

• **Socio demographic characteristics**

Among 95 nursing students, 50.5% belonged to second year BSc Nursing and 49.5% belonged to first year BSc Nursing. 48.4% of the students were Hindus. Majority of the students belonged to first birth order(53.7%) and were residing in rural areas(56.8%). 55.8% scored more than 80% in their plus two annual exam (previous academic achievement). 64.2% passed in all subjects for the sessional exam. Majority of nursing students (67.4%) participated in extracurricular activities and among that 44% spend less than 1 hour for extracurricular activities.

• **Assessment of emotional intelligence among nursing students**

Table :1 Assessment of emotional intelligence among nursing students based on subscales

n=95

Emotional intelligence subscales	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Perception of emotions	36.9	4.29	27	48
Managing own emotions	35.7	4.99	23	45
Managing other's emotions	31.4	3.72	23	39
Utilization of emotions	24	3.52	10	34
Total	128.33	13.12	94	159

As per the above table mean total score of emotional intelligence was found to be 128.33 (SD=13.12) and it was 77.50% of the maximum score (165). The mean scores of subscales of emotional intelligence such as perception of emotions, managing own emotions, managing other's emotions and utilization of emotions were found to be 36.9, 35.7, 31.4 and 24 respectively. Compared to other subscales of emotional intelligence, mean score of perception of emotion was found to be high and utilization of emotion was found to be low.

• **Assessment of burnout among nursing students**

Mean total score of burnout was found to be 28.74 (SD=5.48) and it was found to be 31.93% of the maximum score (90). The mean scores of subscales of burnout such as physical exhaustion, emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment were found to be 9.52, 8.45 and 10.76 respectively. Compared to other subscales of burnout, mean score of reduced personal accomplishment was found to be high and emotional exhaustion was found to be low.

Distribution of burnout based on subscales
Physical exhaustion

75% of nursing students presented a score up to 12 out of 30. Considering that score the cut-off point, it was found that 73.7% had low level of physical exhaustion and 26.3% had high level of physical exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion

75% of nursing students presented a score up to 14. Considering that score the cut-off point, it was found that 81.2% had low level of emotional exhaustion and 18.8% had high level of emotional exhaustion.

Reduced personal accomplishment

75% of nursing students presented a score up to 15. Considering that the score, the cut-off point it was found that 77.9% had low level of reduced personal accomplishment and 22.1% had high level of reduced personal accomplishment.

Correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students.

There was statistically significant moderate negative correlation r= - 0.322, p=0.01) between emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students.
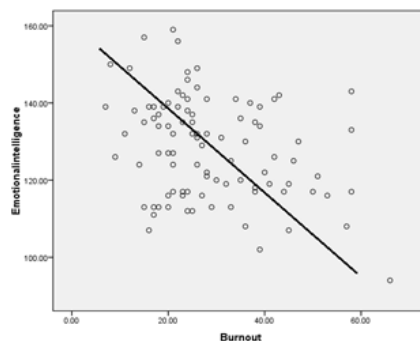

Figure 1: Correlation between Emotional intelligence and Burnout among nursing students

• **Association between emotional intelligence and socio-demographic variables among nursing Students**

There was statistically significant association between emotional intelligence and socio demographic variables such as year of study (t=1.98, df= 93, p=0.05), previous academic achievement (F=4.008, df=91, p=0.01) and extracurricular activities (t=2.73, df= 93, p=0.008).

Association between burnout and socio-demographic variables among nursing Students

There was no statistically significant association between burnout and socio-demographic variables

Discussion

The first objective of the study was to assess the emotional intelligence among nursing students. In the present study emotional intelligence was assessed among 95 nursing students using Schutte emotional intelligence scale. The mean score of emotional intelligence was found to be 128.33(SD= 13.12) and it was 77.5% of the maximum score. The result of present study was supported by another study conducted among 100 baccalaureate nursing students using Baron emotional quotient inventory. The result of the study concluded that mean total score of emotional intelligence were 98 (first year), 103.72 (second year), 103.72 (third year) and 107.8 (fourth year).

The result revealed that 73.7% of students had low level of physical exhaustion, 81.2% had low level of emotional exhaustion and 77.9% had low level of reduced personal accomplishment. The result goes in line with another study conducted among 102 undergraduate nursing students using Maslach burnout inventory. The result of the study revealed that 73.5% are at low or moderate level of emotional exhaustion, 70.53% suffer from a low or moderate level of depersonalization and 76% reported a high degree of personal accomplishment.

The results of the study revealed that there was a significant negative correlation between emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students (r=-0.322, p<0.05). The results of the present study were consistent with another cross sectional study conducted to assess the relationship of emotional intelligence to burnout and job satisfaction among 169 nurses in early nursing practice. The results revealed that there was a negative correlation between overall emotional intelligence and subscales of burnout such as depersonalization (r=-0.175, p=0.024) and personal accomplishment (r=-0.173, p=0.023).[9]

Conclusion

This study provides an insight to the negative relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout among nursing students. Emotional intelligence is important aspect in nursing profession

because the understanding one's own emotion and the ability to process emotions significantly decreases the burnout and contributes to the academic and clinical performance of nursing students. The study concludes that there is need for developing training programs for promoting emotional intelligence and for reducing burnout among nursing students, which enable them to achieve success and mould them as a better future health care provider.

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