



A STUDY ON CHALLENGES OF NURSING STUDENTS IN THE CLINICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT OF SELECTED COLLEGE OF NURSING, LUDHIANA, PUNJAB.

Mental Health Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Clinical skills are essential and important component in nursing career. Clinical learning environment is a combination of physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual factors which affect the student nurses' clinical skills and growth. **Aim:** To explore the challenges of the nursing students in the clinical learning environment. **Methodology:** A qualitative approach with phenomenological research design was used to assess the challenges of nursing students in the clinical learning environment. Data was collected from a sample of 12 students of B.Sc.(N) 4th year of DMCH College of Nursing, Malakpur, Ludhiana. Sample was collected according to principle of redundancy using non- probability convenience sampling technique. Semi-structured interview guide and audio recorder were used to collect data. The challenges faced by nursing students were assessed by in-depth interview. Analysis was done using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. **Results:** The study revealed that majority (50 %) of the nursing students were of age 21 years with mean age $\pm$ SD of (20.83 $\pm$ 0.718), (83.4%) were female, (58.4%) were Sikh, (66.6%) belonged to nuclear family, (83.4%) actual clinical attendance was up to 96-100%, (66.6%) obtained 70-79% marks in their academic performance, (50%) preferred nursing as 1st professional preference, for (41.6%) of the students, the source of motivation for choosing nursing profession was self and parents and (75%) of their family members didn't belong to nursing profession. The data was grouped under 09 main themes i.e.: barriers in clinical learning environment, ineffective planning of clinical experience, ineffective communication, inadequate readiness, psychological response, traditionalism in clinical practice, lack of professional approach, welfare defect and insufficient exposure and these themes were grouped into various subthemes. **Conclusion:** The results obtained in this study showed that there were undesirable experiences of nursing students in the clinical learning environment. While considering the role of clinical practice in the development of personal and professional skills of nursing students, the results of this study could be helpful in quality improvement in the clinical learning environment.

The study aimed to explore the challenges of the nursing students in the clinical learning environment. A qualitative approach with phenomenological research design was used in the study. Data was collected from a sample of 12 students of B.Sc.(N) 4th year of DMCH College of Nursing, Malakpur, Ludhiana. Sample was collected according to principle of redundancy using non- probability convenience sampling technique. Semi-structured interview guide and audio recorder were used to collect data. The challenges faced by nursing students were assessed by in-depth interview. Analysis was done using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics. Results were grouped under 09 main themes i.e.: barriers in clinical learning environment, ineffective planning of clinical experience, ineffective communication, inadequate readiness, psychological response, traditionalism in clinical practice, lack of professional approach, welfare defect and insufficient exposure and these themes were grouped into various subthemes.

KEYWORDS

Challenges, Nursing students, Clinical learning environment

INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a performance-based profession, clinical practice has always been an integral part of nursing education. Practice is an important component of nursing education as it nourishes the individuals' ability in clinical environment. Therefore, nursing has become a field that plays a significant role in the treatment and improvement of human health. Clinical learning experience is located at the center of nursing education. In various aspects, it is effective on the development of professional nursing. Moreover, the clinical area of nursing education is of great worth for nursing students in the selection or rejection of nursing as a career.

So, maximizing the student's ability to adapt to the new learning environment is the primary task of nursing schools. Whereas, to be able to learn nursing care skills in a clinical environment, students must be provided with opportunities to be fully instructed. The clinical learning objectives are included for empowerment of nursing students to develop clinical ability and socialization in the nursing sphere. Furthermore, Clinical education is a main part of nursing curriculum and about half of curriculum time of nursing education is dedicated to it. One of the key characteristics of nursing as a profession is that its education requires a close relationship between theoretical as well as the clinical domain. These events occur within a complex and vital learning environment, well-known as the clinical environment.

However, learning in clinical environments has several gains, but at the same time, it can be challenging, unpredictable, stressful, and constantly changing. It has been exhibited that contrast to positive clinical experiences, negative clinical experiences have auxiliary effects on trust, attitude, and students learning in clinical context. Exploring the challenges or difficulties of nursing students in the clinical setting could improve pedagogy and enhance the quality of its

planning and promotion of the students.

AIM & OBJECTIVE

To explore the challenges of the nursing students in the clinical learning environment.

Review Of Literature

Jamshidi N, Molazem Z, Sharif F, Torabizadeh C, Kalyani M.N. (2016) conducted a qualitative study on challenges of nursing students in clinical learning environment, from Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran. Total of 17 students from different academic semester and 3 clinical nursing instructors were evaluated. Data was collected using individual and group interviews which involved 16 general and open questions. Findings showed three themes after data analysis, i.e. ineffective communications, inadequate readiness and emotional reactions. The study concluded that nursing students in Iran were faced with many challenges in the clinical learning environment.

Moghaddam H.R, Aghamohammadi V, Jafari M, Absalan M, Nasiri K. (2020) conducted a qualitative study on challenges faced by nursing students to work with nursing personnel in city of Khalkhal, Ardabil province, Iran. Purposive sampling was used and twenty students were interviewed using in-depth semi-structured techniques. Challenges faced by nursing students' learning were categorized in three main themes including inappropriate social norms, inadequate organizational atmosphere and inadequate resources. Hence, it seemed that inappropriate organizational culture in the clinical setting and wrong distribution of resources will lead to hamper student-nurse relationships and ultimately disrupting the clinical education.

Thi H.T. (2019) conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study on challenges for nursing students in the clinical learning environment of

Hong Bang International University (HIU), Vietnam. Total 69 (58 females and 11 males) third year nursing students of the Bachelor of Nursing Program participated in the study. CLEI questionnaire was used as the tool in this study. Result showed that some challenges in the CLEI for nursing students were usually related to interpersonal relationships often with stakeholders or other health workers. Nursing students were not really oriented about their role in clinical practice sessions, which also became one of the barriers for this learning environment.

Killam L.A, Heerschap C. (2013) conducted a qualitative study on challenges to student learning in the clinical setting, Cambrian college. Total of 11 students were recruited from 3rd and 4th year for the study through purposive sampling technique and data was collected through semi- structured format. They perceived three major themes which involved internal reaction to external limitations, barrier experienced within the clinical environment and ineffective program organization. The study concluded that students faced numerous challenges to their learning.

METHOD

A qualitative approach with phenomenological research design was used to assess the challenges of nursing students in the clinical learning environment. The target population for the study was comprised of the students of B.Sc. (Nursing) in selected college of nursing, Ludhiana. The sample were B.Sc. (N) 4th year students of DMCH College of Nursing, Malakpur. Sample was selected by using non probability convenience sampling technique. Sample size was drawn as per principle of redundancy. Hence, sample size was 12 B.Sc. Nursing 4th year students. Socio-demographic profile, Semi- structured interview guide & audio-recorder were used. Pilot study was carried out on 3 B.Sc. nursing 4th year students of DMCH College of Nursing, Ludhiana. Data collection was done by conducting in-depth interviews with participants and audio-recording of the conversations. Interview questionnaire contained open-ended questions, as well as their own narratives about the experience during their clinical learning environment. It took 45 to 60 minutes to collect the data.

RESULTS

Table No.1: - Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Nursing Students As Per Their Socio – Demographic Profile. N=12

Socio - demographic variables	f (%)
Age (in years)	
20	4 (33.4)
21	6 (50)
22	2 (16.6)
Gender	
Male	2 (16.6)
Female	10 (83.4)
Religion	
Hindu	5 (41.6)
Sikh	7 (58.4)
Christian	0 (0)
Muslim	0 (0)
Other	0 (0)
Type of Family	
Nuclear	8 (66.6)
Joint	3 (25)
Extended	1 (8.4)
Actual Clinical Attendance	
96-100%	10(83.4)
91-95%	1(8.3)
86-90%	0 (0)
81-85%	1(8.3)
Academic Performance	
80% and above	0 (0)
70-79%	8 (66.6)
60-69%	4 (33.4)
50-59%	0 (0)
1st Professional Preference	
Medical	4 (33.4)
Nursing	6 (50)
Engineering	0 (0)
Specify	
BSc. Agriculture (Hons)	1(8.3)
Teaching	1(8.3)

Source of Motivation for Choosing Nursing Profession:	
Self	5 (41.6)
Parents	5 (41.6)
Relatives	1 (8.4)
Others	1 (8.4)
Any One from Nursing Profession in Family	
Yes	3 (25)
No	9 (75.0)
Specify	
Aunt	2(66.6)
Sister	1(33.4)

Mean age $\pm$ SD (20.83 $\pm$ 0.718)

Table 2. Cluster Of Participants' Themes With Frequency And Percentage Of Formulated Responses (Theme I- Theme IX)

S. No.	Themes Emerged	Sub-themes *	f (%)
1.	Barriers in clinical learning environment	I. Separation between teaching-learning activities II. Hinderance to experience within the clinical environment III. Unsupportive learning environment IV. Documenting work V. Moving students from one area to another VI. Distrust of patients VII. Poor acceptance of students in clinicals VIII. Lack of understanding of students IX. Large group X. Lack of diversity in clinical case XI. Not acknowledging students' presence	10 (83.33) 7(58.33) 7(58.33) 6(50.00) 6(50.00) 5(41.66) 4(33.33) 3(25.00) 3(25.00) 2(16.66) 1(08.33)
2.	Ineffective planning of clinical experience	I. Little learning through written assignments II. Fixed duty timings III. Evaluation of practical skills IV. Inadequate focus on clinical learning V. Area allocation	5(41.66) 3(25.00) 2(16.66) 2(16.66) 1(08.33)
3.	Ineffective communication	I. Disregard II. Discrimination III. Lack of respect IV. Insufficiently developed communication skills V. Inadequate professional respect among nurses VI. Defamatory language VII. Language barrier	11(91.66) 8(66.66) 7(58.33) 4(33.33) 3(25.00) 2(16.66) 1(08.33)
4.	Inadequate readiness	I. Decrease in confidence II. Inadequate knowledge III. Students' motivation IV. Lack of initiation in learning V. Deficient practical skills	9(75.00) 7(58.33) 5(41.66) 4(33.33) 3(25.00)

5.	Psychological response	I. Fear in performing procedure II. Professional inferiority complex III. Intimidation IV. Unnecessary fear	6(50.00) 3(25.00) 2(16.66) 2(16.66)
6.	Traditionalism in clinical practice	I. Functional assignment II. Theory -practice gap III. Theory-practice disruption	11(91.66) 8(66.66) 5(41.66)
7.	Lack of professional approach	I. Professional identity II. Professional boundary violation	5(41.66) 2(16.66)
8.	Welfare defect	I. No provision of lockers for students	1(08.33)
9.	Insufficient exposure	I. Negligible exposure to medical rounds II. Inadequate clinical exposure due to lockdown	9(75.00) 7(58.33)

* Multiple responses

CONCLUSION

The present study concluded that the undesirable experiences or challenges of nursing students in the clinical learning environment, such as barriers in clinical learning environment, ineffective planning of clinical experience, ineffective communication, inadequate readiness, psychological response, traditionalism in clinical practice, lack of professional approach, welfare defect and insufficient exposure have an influential role in the clinical practice of these nursing students. Considering the role of clinical practice in the development of personal and professional skills of nursing students, the results of this study could be helpful in quality improvement in the clinical learning environment.

Scope For Future Study

1. A descriptive study can be conducted on the challenges of nursing students in the clinical learning environment.
2. A comparative study can be conducted to assess the challenges in clinical learning environment among B.Sc. nursing students in other institutes of Ludhiana, Punjab.

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