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Assessing the nursing students' perceptions of their clinical experience in hospitals in two parishes in Jamaica

Background: In nursing programmes, students are exposed to both theoretical and clinical components. Hence, the students in this study are required to complete a seven-week clinical practicum in a hospital setting. This course is designed to provide an opportunity for nursing students to put into practice the theoretical knowledge learnt in their training. This study was designed to assess the perceptions of nursing students about their clinical practice experience.

Methods: An ex-post-facto design was used in the study. A purposeful sampling method was used to select 107 (3 males and 104 females) students who were enrolled in four-degree nursing programme. Data were collected through the use of a questionnaire which had a reliability coefficient of .87.

Results: The results showed that 66 (62%) of those surveyed, reported being nervous during the first few weeks as a result of not having enough practice, not knowing what to expect, and fear of being assessed. 52 (49%) experienced transportation-related, and 38 (36%) had issues working with nurses in the hospitals. There was a high level of agreement for these items: finding the clinical experience valuable ($M=4.35$, $SD=.76$), learning a lot from the clinical assignment ($M=4.17$, $SD=.89$), and feeling confidence while in the ward ($M=4.13$, $SD=.82$). 74 (69%) indicated that they would remain in the nursing profession after their training.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, recommendations were made on how to address some of the problems encountered by the students during the clinical session, and the need to promote the intrinsic values of becoming a nurse and remaining in the profession.

Biography

Andrea Pusey-Murray is an Associate Professor and Program Director for undergraduate nursing program in the Caribbean School of Nursing at University of Technology, Jamaica (Papine Campus). She has published peer reviewed articles in journals such as International Journal of Nursing Science, International Journal of Prevention and Treatment, Biomedical Science and Engineering and Mental Health in Family Medicine. She has authored a book chapter entitled, "Attendance and Performance of Undergraduate Students in Two Nursing Courses in a University in Jamaica, In Advancing Education in the Caribbean and Africa" and co-authored Cultural Voices and Human Rights: Case Exemplars in the "Routledge Handbook of Global Mental Health Nursing". Currently, she serves on the Curriculum and Development Committee Nursing Council of Jamaica. She has Membership with the Nurses Association of Jamaica and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing Theta theta Chapter.

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