Empathy in Baccalaureate Nursing Students and Their Clinical Mentors: Is There a Relationship?

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Background:

- Evidence of limited ability to communicate empathy (Ozcan, 2010; Reynolds, & Scott, 2000).

- Clinical learning experiences may impact empathy (Fields, Mahan, Tillman, 2011).
Background:

- Patient’s distress may be reduced when the nurse utilizes empathetic communication. (Ward et al, 2009)

- Patient satisfaction increases with use of empathetic communication (Zachariae, Pedersen, & Jensen, 2003).
Background:

- Significant link between physician empathy and optimal physiological outcomes in diabetic patients (Hojat, et al, 2011).
Compassion brings us to a stop, and for a moment we rise above ourselves
-- Mason Cochey
Purpose(s):

- To examine the personal and educational characteristics that influence the level of empathy in baccalaureate nursing students.

- To determine if there is a relationship between empathy scores of baccalaureate nursing students and their clinical nurse mentors.
Research Questions:

- Will group scores on the Jefferson Scale of Empathy Health Provider Student Version (JSE-HP-SV) be reduced as a result of the clinical learning experiences?

- Is there a correlation between empathy group scores of baccalaureate nursing students and their practicing clinical mentors?
Definitions:


- Three Grand Factors
  1. Perspective taking
  2. Compassionate care
  3. Standing in shoes of patient
“Nurses must, in a sense, get ‘inside the skin’ of each patient in order to know what help she or he needs from them.”
(Henderson, 1978, p. 35)

Virginia Henderson
Methods: Design

- Two year longitudinal descriptive survey design.
- Convenience sample
Methods: Participants

- Upper division baccalaureate nursing students
- Clinical preceptors/mentors.
Methods: Data Collection

- Pre and post
  1. Jefferson Scale of Empathy Health Providers (20-item, 7-point Likert scale).
  2. Demographic survey
- Alpha Reliability
Data Analysis:

- Correlational Analyses
- T-tests
- ANOVA
Results: Question One

- Group Demographic Comparisons

1. Mean scores higher in female students (112.5) than male students (104.1).

2. Mean scores higher (118.4) for students over 40 than for students 20-29 years (109.7).
## Results: Question Two

Comparison of students with mentors on total scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students (n = 265)</th>
<th>Mentors (n = 136)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Score</td>
<td>111.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
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</table>

**p < .01
Limitations:

- Convenience sample
- Unable to match students with clinical mentors
- Hawthorne effect
Conclusions:

- Decrease in empathy scores
- Gender differences
- Increase in empathy scores with age mentors.
- Equivalent empathy scores of clinical mentors.
- Impact of life experiences
Implications:

- Nursing practice
- Nursing education
- Nursing research
- Nursing administration
Recommendations for Further Research:

- Random sampling
- Larger sample
- Multiple University settings
- Match clinical mentor with student
“Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?”

Henry David Thoreau
Thank You!!!
References


References


References

