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Caring for the Poor: Nurses' Attitudes Toward Patients From the Culture of Poverty

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Background/Significance of problem:

Living in the culture of poverty challenges people when seeking healthcare. Attitudes of staff caring for the poor can affect return to the care system and health outcomes. In the United States, 43.1 million or 15.9% of the population live in poverty. Nurses should be aware of and understand personal attitudes and biases toward poverty to positively effect health outcomes.

Clinical question/project purpose:

The purpose of this project is to assess the attitudes of nurses toward patients from the culture of poverty and provide an educational intervention about poverty to effect positive change in those attitudes. What are the attitudes of registered nurses toward patients from the culture of poverty? How does an educational intervention change those attitudes?

Search of literature/best evidence:

Databases used included CINAHL, Proquest Health and Medical Complete, Social Work Abstracts, sociINDEX, PsychINFO, Medline, and EBSCOhost. Google Scholar provided topic information. Search terms included attitudes, culture, poverty, culture of poverty, attitudes toward poverty, stigma, bias, cultural diversity, perceptions, poor, nursing, and cultural nursing theories. Inclusion criteria for works reviewed included editorials and peer reviewed published articles and books from the years 1928-2017.

Clinical appraisal of literature/best evidence:

A need exists for further exploration of the attitudes nurses have toward patients from the culture of poverty. When appraising current research, few studies focused on attitudes of nurses toward patients from the culture of poverty. Nursing has a moral and ethical responsibility to ascertain there is no differentiation in care for poor patients. Literature indicates that poverty patients have limited access to quality healthcare compared to the middle and upper classes.

Integration into practice:

Nurses who volunteered in the study participated in a one-hour CEU educational offering about the culture of poverty. Participants learned about the culture of poverty, how to care for patients from the culture of poverty, and became cognizant of their bias.

Evaluation of evidenced-based practice:
A quasi-experimental research design utilized a cross-sectional pre/post survey of registered nurses working at a local rural hospital. Attitudes of the nurses toward poverty were analyzed using the Attitudes Toward Poverty short form developed by Yun and Weaver before and after an educational presentation about the culture of poverty. Demographic data was collected via a set of nominal/ordinal level questions designed by the principal investigator. Descriptive statistics were used for the data analysis.

Title:
Caring for the Poor: Nurses' Attitudes Toward Patients From the Culture of Poverty

Keywords:
Attitudes, Nurses and Poverty

References:


Abstract Summary:
Patients from the culture of poverty are challenged when seeking health care. When nurses are cognizant of their personal attitudes and biases toward poverty, practice may change and improve health outcomes for this population.

Content Outline:
STTI Poster Content Outline

1. Introduction
   a. In the United States, 43.1 million or 15.9% of the population live in poverty.
   b. Attitudes of staff caring for the poor can affect return to the care system and health outcomes.
2. Clinical question/project purpose
   a. What are the attitudes of registered nurses toward patients from the culture of poverty?
   b. How does an educational intervention change those attitudes?
3. Clinical appraisal of literature/best evidence
   a. Few studies focus on attitudes of nurses toward patients from the culture of poverty.
   b. Nursing has a moral and ethical responsibility to ascertain there is no differentiation in care for poor patients.
4. Integration into practice
   a. One-hour CEU offered about the culture of poverty
   b. Learning about the culture of poverty, how to care for patients from the culture of poverty and becoming cognizant of personal bias may improve nursing practice
5. Evaluation
   a. Quasi-experimental research design utilizing a cross-sectional pre/post survey of registered nurses working at a local rural hospital
   b. Attitudes Toward Poverty Short Form survey used to assess nurse attitudes
   c. Survey results currently being analyzed

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**Professional Experience:** 1999-2002 Child Care Nurse Consultant 1 of the first seven to develop this program in the state of Illinois. Provided education and consulting for day care centers, day care homes, day care providers in nine counties. 2002-2005 Maternal-Child Health Nurse Consultant State of Illinois DHS. Covered seven counties. Provided consultation, program review, and education for health departments, family planning clinics, WIC, counseling centers, Teen Parent Services programs, and HealthWorks for foster children. 2006-2012 Director of Medical-Oncology Blessing Hospital, Quincy, Illinois

**Author Summary:** Kimi Yuchs is an Assistant Professor at Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing in Quincy, Illinois and a doctoral nursing student at the University of Southern Indiana. She became interested in the poverty when working as a nurse consultant for the state of Illinois. Kimi has provided many educational programs on poverty. Her current research interest is the attitudes of nurses toward the patients from the culture of poverty and how attitudes affect delivery of care.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Bonham has been a nurse for over 40 years. She holds a PhD in Nursing Research and is an experienced scholar, author, educator, and clinical nurse specialist in child psychiatric nursing.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Bonham is a faculty advisor for doctoral nursing students at USI. Her background in child psychiatric nursing and interest in poverty has been a tremendous support for the primary author of this poverty project.