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Changes in Baccalaureate Nursing Students' Perceptions About Caring for Dying Patients

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Nurses play a key role in caring for the dying patients and families (ANA, 2016). The Institute of Medicine (2014) identified end-of-life care as a priority for quality improvement in the healthcare setting. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2017) and National League for Nursing (2018) call for inclusion of end-of-life care as a vital component of baccalaureate nursing education. Studies have reported on nursing student attitudes toward end-of-life care (Carmen et al., 2016; Conner, Loerzel, & Uddin, 2014; Max & MacKenzie, 2017). The Frommelt Attitude Toward Care of the Dying (FATCOD) scale is a validated tool used to measure nurses' attitudes toward caring for the dying (Frommelt, 1991). This tool has been validated and used in many studies (Carmen, et al., 2016; Lippe & Becker, 2015; Max & MacKenzie, 2017).

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of baccalaureate nursing students toward caring for the dying at the beginning and end of a baccalaureate nursing program and factors that influence student perceptions. A multi method study was utilized to identify changes in attitude toward caring for the dying (measured by the FATCOD) and factors that impacted student perceptions (open-ended question). **Methods:** Baccalaureate nursing students were surveyed at the beginning and end of the nursing program. **Results:** Results include descriptive statistics for demographics (age, gender, previous experience in caring for the dying, current experience in caring for the dying). Linear regression demonstrated that total attitudes scores of baccalaureate nursing students at the beginning were lower than at the end of the nursing program ($p=0.0001$). **Conclusion:** This change indicates increased comfort in caring for the dying patient. Qualitative analysis for factors that influenced student attitudes about caring for the dying will be presented by themes.

This study aimed to determine student attitudes toward caring for the dying and factors that influence student perceptions. Results indicate a positive change in attitude between students at the beginning and end of the program. Factors that influence attitudes include personal life as well as experiences associated with the nursing education program. This study expands understanding of student perceptions about caring for the dying and provides a foundation for improvement in the education program. Implications for education, practice, and leadership will be discussed.

Title:

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Keywords:

Attitude, Care for dying patients and Undergraduate students

References:

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Abstract Summary:

The purposes of this study were to determine the changes in attitudes of baccalaureate nursing students toward caring for the dying from the beginning to the end of a baccalaureate nursing program and identify factors that influence students' perceptions. A multi method study was utilized.

Content Outline:

I. Background: Nurses play a key role in caring for the dying patients and families (ANA, 2016). The Institute of Medicine (2014) identified end-of-life care as a priority for quality improvement in the healthcare setting. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2017) and National League for Nursing (2018) call for inclusion of end-of-life care as a vital component of baccalaureate nursing education. Studies have reported on nursing students' attitudes toward end-of-life care (Carmen et al., 2016; Conner, Loerzel, & Uddin, 2014; Max & MacKenzie, 2017).

II. Purpose: The purposes of this study were to determine the changes in attitudes of baccalaureate nursing students toward caring for the dying from the beginning to the end of a baccalaureate nursing program and factors that influence students' perceptions.

III. Design and Sample: The study was approved by the university Institutional Review Board (IRB). This multi-method study assessed student attitudes toward caring for dying patients and the factors that

impact student perceptions. First (n= 100) and final (n= 72) baccalaureate nursing students were surveyed.

Instruments: A. The Frommelt Attitude Toward Care of the Dying (FATCOD) scale is a validated tool used to measure nurses' attitudes toward caring for the dying (Frommelt, 1991). This tool has been validated and used in many studies (Carmen, et al., 2016; Lippe & Becker, 2015; Max & MacKenzie, 2017). B. Qualitative Data: What factors influenced your attitude about caring for the dying?

V. Results: Demographic data includes student age, gender, previous experience caring for the dying, and current experience caring for dying. Results from linear regression demonstrated that total attitudes scores of baccalaureate nursing students at the beginning were lower than at the end of the nursing program, thus an increase in comfort in caring for the dying. Qualitative analysis includes themes for factors that students identified as impacting their attitude in caring for the dying patient.

VI. Discussion of results.

V. Conclusion: Implications for nursing education and practice will be discussed.

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