Baccalaureate Nursing Students’ Attitudes towards Caring for Dying Patients

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INTRODUCTION

- Descriptive study utilizing the Frommelt Attitudes Toward Care of the Dying Scale, Form B (FATCOD-B) to compare Level I, Level II, and Level III students’ attitudes toward caring for dying patients and their families.

METHODOLOGY

- FATCOD-B is a 30-item, five-point Likert scale instrument. Potential scores range from 30-150. A higher score indicates a more positive attitude toward caring for the dying population (Frommelt, 2003).

INSTRUMENT

- What are the attitudes towards caring for dying patients and their families among Level I, Level II, and Level III Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students?
- Are there differences among Level I, Level II, and Level III BSN students?

FINDINGS

- Students whose religious beliefs had a minor influence on their attitude toward death and dying had statistically higher FATCOD scores (M=126, p<.001) than those whose religious beliefs did not influence their attitude (M=113).
- In comparing Level I, Level II and Level III students who received previous EOL education, no significant difference was found.

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size (N=60). A meaningful effect size estimate for planning subsequent studies would be beneficial.
- Only one BSN program included.

REFERENCES

- Eb et al. (2014). Descriptive study identified first-year nursing students’ experiences of death and caring for patients at the EOL. Findings indicated a need for continued research and development of EOL care education.
- Jafari et al. (2015). Pre-test, post-test design study associated negative attitudes and related them to deficiencies in undergraduate EOL nursing education.
- Lippe et al. (2017). Descriptive cross-sectional survey design evaluated the integration of an EOL educational intervention into an existing undergraduate nursing curriculum. Inclusion of EOL education may help enhance students’ attitudes and perceived competence in caring for dying patients.

IMPLICATIONS

- Practice
  - EOL care education embedded into BSN curriculum could influence graduates’ care for dying patients and their families.
- Education
  - Consider addition of specific EOL care course or incorporate EOL education throughout the curriculum.
  - Enhance the curriculum with ELNEC modules and simulation.
- Future Research
  - Increase sample size; include additional BSN programs.
  - Test efficacy of an EOL care course by using a pre-test, post-test design.