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Nurse Educators, Nursing Students, and Licensed Nurses Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Complementary and Alternative Medicine

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Background: The use of Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) involves various medical healthcare systems, practices, and products outside of conventional medicine (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health [NCCIH], 2016). Diverse groups of people use CAM methods such as, acupuncture, biofeedback, massage therapy, and meditation (NCCIH, 2016). Therefore, many patients are knowledgeable and inquisitive to the use of CAM integrative medicine as an alternative or complement to conventional medicine (Hall et al, 2017; Engebretson, 1999). Despite evidence proving the effectiveness of CAM, a gap still exists between the knowledge and attitudes of licensed nurses and the integration of these complementary alternative medicines into nursing practice (Zoe et al., 2014; Trail-Mahan et al., 2013; Uzun & Tan, 2004).

Purpose: The purpose of this cross-sectional evidence-based research study was to assess the knowledge and attitudes of nurse educators, nursing students, and licensed nurses regarding complementary alternative medicine. The goal of this study was to provide baseline information to integrate CAM at the novice student nurse level to carry out, through modeling and role-modeling, as a practicing licensed nurse providing patients with alternatives to conventional medicine therapies (Alligood, 2014).

The specific aims were: (1) to assess the knowledge and attitudes of nurse educators, nursing students and licensed nurses regarding CAM, and (2) to determine if there is a difference between the 3-groups level of knowledge and attitudes regarding CAM ([a] nurse educator and nursing student, [b] nursing student and licensed nurse, and [c] nurse educator and licensed nurse]).

Methods: This study utilized a convenience sample of participants [n = 180] meeting the subgroup criteria (nurse educators [n = 37], practicing nurses [n = 57], and nursing students [n = 86]). Participants provided self-reported quantitative data responses to demographics and CAM Health Belief Questionnaire (10-item) online via Qualtrics. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for internal consistency in this nursing population yielding $\alpha = 0.85$ (Lie & Boker, 2004).

Results: The majority of the participants were female (168, 93%) consistent with the current nursing workforce. The median total score for all participants on the CAM Health Belief Questionnaire was $M = 54.3$ with scores ranging from 19-70 on a scale of 10-70. The higher score depicts higher levels of knowledge and positive attitude towards CAM. There was a significant difference between the three groups [$M = X^2(2, n = 180) = 8.36, p = 0.015$]. Two group comparisons for statistical difference was analyzed revealing no statistical difference between nurse educators and licensed nurses.

However, there were significant differences found between nurse educators and nursing students ($p = 0.019$) and nursing students and licensed nurses ($p = 0.009$). Descriptive and non-parametric statistics were calculated using IBM-SPSS® 24.

Conclusion: The results represent a baseline level of the knowledge and attitudes of these nurses regarding CAM and reveal its utilization in practice. Interestingly, 35% of the participants could not recall any education regarding CAM with only 10% being opposed to using CAM in their nursing practice. Most participants strongly hold the belief that CAM is not a threat to the public (56%) and should be incorporated into the patient care process to the extent of the patient's expectations (76%). The results may be significant in determining the differences (knowledge and attitudes) between nursing curriculum and integration of CAM into practice. Further studies to validate and advance these results are recommended.

Title:

Nurse Educators, Nursing Students, and Licensed Nurses Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Complementary and Alternative Medicine

Keywords:

Complementary Alternative Medicine, Holistic Therapies and Nurses

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Abstract Summary:

The implementation of Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) mirrors the nurses knowledge and attitude regarding various therapies and practices outside of conventional medicine. Despite evidence proving the effectiveness of CAM, a gap exists between the knowledge and attitudes of licensed nurses and the integration of complementary alternative medicine into nursing practice.

Content Outline:

1. Background
 1. Complementary Alternative Medicine (CAM) use and techniques in diverse groups.
 2. Knowledge level of patients drives the need for elevated knowledge level of nurses.
2. Methodology
 1. Purpose
 1. The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge and attitudes of nurse educators, nursing students, and licensed nurses regarding complementary alternative medicine.
 1. Cross-sectional design collected data at one point in time.
 2. Goal was to provide baseline information to integrate CAM at the novice student nurse level
 2. Specific Aims were:
 1. to assess the knowledge and attitude of nurse educators, nursing students and licensed nurses regarding CAM
 2. to determine if there is a difference between the 3-groups level of knowledge and attitudes regarding CAM.
 2. Data Collection
 1. Stratified sample of participants for group representation.
 2. Instruments included Demographics and the CAM Health Belief Questionnaire
 3. Results
 1. Demographics reported through descriptive statistics.
 2. Specific aims are answered through non-parametric statistical analysis using Mann-Whitney U for between 2 group comparison and Kruskal-Willis M Rank for between 3 group comparison.
 3. Conclusion
 1. These results represent a baseline level of the knowledge and attitudes of nurses regarding CAM and reveal its utilization in practice.
 2. The results may be significant in determining the differences (knowledge and attitudes) between nursing curriculum and integration of CAM into practice.

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Author Summary: In 2001, Dr. Pipkins sustained a work-related musculoskeletal injury with traditional medicine as the main focus for healthcare. Upon multiple recalls of medications she was receiving, the fear of side effects and longevity of medications sent her on the quest for Complementary and Alternative Therapies. Dr. Pipkins has been the project director for several student EBP projects and mentored research studies regarding expressive art, aromatherapy, and CAM.

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Author Summary: Working alongside her mentor, Dr. Cynthia M. Pipkins, Victoria gathered and compared data regarding the knowledge and attitudes between nurse educators, students and licensed nurses. Data obtained established the baseline gap between nursing curriculum and integration of CAM into practice.