Associations Between Caring Among Nursing Students

Jacquelyn Lambert-Davis, DNP, RN;1 Patricia Patrician, PhD, RN, FAAN2
1Quality Management, Birmingham Veterans Administration; 2University of Alabama at Birmingham, School of Nursing

Introduction

• Caring is an emotion. It is a feeling of compassion and an understanding of the difficulties of others
• Research indicates that caring behaviors and attitudes are an important part of the knowledge base for nursing students
• This descriptive study reports the findings of caring attitudes and behaviors of nursing students using the Caring Dimensions Inventory (CDI)

Methods

• Descriptive statistics were computed using the SPSS software to determine the distribution of variables in the sample
• Data was then analyzed by using a t-test to determine the difference between the mean CDI scores of nursing students who chose nursing as a first career and nursing students who did not
• A total of 121 students from accelerated and traditional baccalaureate programs answered the CDI questions
• The demographic characteristics were the students’ age (groups 18-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51 and over), gender, race/ethnicity, and planned career trajectory
• The independent variable was whether nursing students chose nursing as a first career or not
• The dependent variable was the CDI score

Pathway to Caring

Figure: Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age-Groups</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Age, Number & Percentage

Results

• There was a significant difference on the CDI scores between those nursing students who chose nursing as a first career and nursing students who did not
• The CDI scores of students who chose nursing (mean 109.97, SD 10.20, p = .002) than those who did not choose nursing as their primary career choice
• Out of the 103 females and 18 males; a CDI significance was not found
• Race did not show a significance difference
• Age groups showed statistically significant between groups (mean square .44, p = .016)
• The post hoc multiple comparisons by ages also showed statistically significant on the CDI (mean .2357, p = .004)
• In this sample the CDI had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.87

Conclusions

• Caring is an essential concept of the nursing curriculum, and may be measured with the use of the CDI
• Watson’s theory of human caring may serve as a philosophical context for a humanistic approach to care
• Essentially, the results of the study may fill a gap in nursing knowledge in terms of what is known about BSN nursing students’ attitudes and caring behaviors

References