Nearly 18% of the United States population will be at least 65 years or older by 2025. This causes a need to increase the number of nurses who are prepared and want to work with this specific population of need. Studies suggest student nurses have a negative attitude toward working with this population for various reasons. These reasons include things such as preconceived ideas about older adults and their needs, working with population is difficult and hard to relate to, and general lack of interest for this population. There is a need to increase the number of graduate nurses who have positive attitudes towards older adults and an interest in working with this population upon graduation. This pre- and post-test intervention study aimed to: 1) examine the effectiveness of two educational modalities, a case study and simulated role-playing scenarios, on improving attitudes and empathy towards older adults; 2) explore factors affecting attitudes and empathy in accelerated baccalaureate of science in nursing (ABSN) students towards older adults. A convenience sample of 45 ABSN students completed pre- and post-test questionnaires. The results showed role-playing simulation scenarios had no impact on improving attitudes and empathy towards older adults, however, within group, the case study intervention was found to improve students’ attitudes. No significant predictor was found for attitudes; one significant predictor was found for empathy. Empathy is highly correlated with attitude. Further study is needed to explore educational modalities that improve attitudes and empathy in the ABSN student population. No one method was ‘better’ than another. This suggests that there needs to be a combination method of using case studies and simulated role play to increase attitudes and empathy towards older adults not only in this specific population but in all entries into the nursing profession. The study is limited by sample and size.


Abstract Summary:

This pre- and post-test intervention study aimed to: 1) examine the effectiveness of two educational modalities, a case study and simulated role-playing scenarios, on improving attitudes and empathy towards older adults; 2) explore factors affecting attitudes and empathy in accelerated baccalaureate of science in nursing (ABSN) students towards older adults.

Content Outline:

Discuss aging population and need for nursing specializing in caring for older adults
Discussion of current attitudes in nursing students toward older adults
Discussion of empathy towards older adults
Research study using case studies and simulated role play
Discussion of findings and future implications

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