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Title:

Early Integration of Gerontologic Didactic and Clinical Experiences: Changing Nursing Students' Attitudes, Interest, and Knowledge

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Session Title: Meet the Poster Authors Session

Slot: PST: Friday, March 27, 2020: 2:30 PM-3:15 PM

Abstract Describes: Ongoing Work/Project

Applicable Category: Clinical, Academic, Students

Keywords: attitudes, misconceptions, and myths about the older adult, curricular innovations and undergraduate nursing students

Abstract Summary:

Nurse educators across the globe are challenged to assist students to value gerontological nursing. This study will explore whether a nursing course with integrated gerontological content and innovative clinical strategies can impact the attitudes, knowledge, and interest of first semester undergraduate nursing students toward older adults.

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Abstract Text:

Purpose: Nursing professionals are caring for increasingly large numbers of elderly clients who require special considerations to meet their diverse needs. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), populations worldwide are living longer with the number of people over 60 years of age expected to nearly double from 12% in 2015 to 22% in 2050 (World Health Organization, 2018). In the United States (U.S.), the older adult population has increased from 39 million in 2000 to 49.2 million in 2016 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2018). By 2030 the older adult will represent one in five individuals within the overall population (U. S. Census Bureau, 2018). As the aging community grows, the need to prepare nurses equipped to care for older adults is critical. Nursing curricula must be designed to prepare nurses for complex planning, management, and coordination of care for the geriatric population (Hovey, Dyck, Reese, & Kim, 2016, p.145). However, students in undergraduate nursing programs tend to express much interest in acute and critical care content and experiences and little enthusiasm for gerontologic nursing. Negative attitudes, myths and misconceptions, and lack of educational experiences and opportunities to increase knowledge about the care of older adults may be factors that contribute to students' lack of interest in the care of older adults (Lee, Garfin, Vaughn, & Lee, 2018; Lowey, 2018). Nurse educators across the globe are challenged to assist students to value gerontological nursing and to dispel myths and stereotypes about older adults (Algozo, Peters, Ramjan, & East, 2016; Gibbs & Kulig, 2017; Sarabia-Cobo & Pfeiffer, 2015). The literature demonstrates the importance of assessment of gerontological content in the curriculum, and the implementation of new and creative teaching methods to advance the health of the aging population and to promote positive attitudes related to care of the older adult (Schroeder, 2015; Gray-Miceli & Morse, 2019). The purpose of this study is to explore whether the Nursing Care of Adults I course in a newly revised curriculum with integrated gerontological didactic and innovative clinical experiences can impact the attitudes, knowledge, and interest of first semester undergraduate nursing students toward older adults.

Methods: A convenience sample of approximately 104 junior nursing students enrolled in the course will be surveyed using Breytspraak & Badura (2015) revised Facts on Aging Quiz at the beginning and end of the semester. The instrument has been used by independent researchers and is psychometrically and conceptually sound. Demographic data to be collected includes age, identified gender, and interest in gerontological nursing.

Results: This ongoing study will be completed spring 2020. Data processing models will include descriptive statistical procedures.

Conclusion: This study will demonstrate the impact of curricular and clinical innovations designed to improve students' attitudes, knowledge, and interests toward older adults and possibly translate into improved nursing care of the older individual. Further research on nursing students' perceptions of older adults may also provide insight into the development of attitudes and educational strategies that may encourage students to consider gerontological nursing as an option for career choice (Lee et al., 2018).