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Educational Practice and EBP Beliefs With Undergraduate Nursing Students: A Pilot Study

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Purpose:

Nursing leaders have directed educators to incorporate information about the research process and skills associated with EBP with undergraduate students. Best timing for this course content is ambiguous. Faculty seeks evidence to determine the best way to plan the EBP research course prior to making any changes in educational practice or policies. Several researchers have noted that knowledge about EBP is gained within the classroom EBP research course but its implementation is actualized in concurrent or subsequent clinical courses. This study examined how an innovative EBP research course which included collaboration with clinical faculty affected EBP beliefs in a cohort of junior nursing students compared to senior nursing students who completed a traditional research course.

Methods:

After completing their research course, 70 nursing students were invited to participate. Eighteen juniors and 18 seniors responded by accessing the survey via an on-line Qualtrics link. The age range for the junior class was 19-20 and the seniors range was 21-23. The EBP Beliefs Scale is a 16 item 5 point Likert scale that measures a person's beliefs about the value of EBP and their ability to implement it. Cronbach alpha coefficient for this sample was .86.

Results:

Seniors' mean total score was 62.38 and juniors' mean total score was 57.88. An independent t-test revealed no significant difference in total scores but there were statistically significant differences on 2 items ($p < .05$). They were: "measuring outcomes of clinical care" and "the ability to implement EBP". Both groups believed that evidence based guidelines can improve clinical care, EBP involved a lot of time, and implementing EBP will result in the best clinical care.

Conclusion:

There were no negative effects by providing the research course in the junior year. Seniors might have had higher means on the two identified items because they had more clinical experience and opportunities to deliver evidence-based care to patients. Educators should feel confident in developing a policy about providing this course in the junior year. Junior students would gain EBP skills early and have more occasions to use EBP in clinical practicums. Faculty should design clinical activities that encourage students to use their EBP skills in the care of their patients throughout the curriculum. Limitations include the small sample size and lack of a pre-test and diversity (age, single site) among the students. Future researchers should plan longitudinal studies to show changes about EBP beliefs in subsequent courses and quantitative studies that explore the association between faculty beliefs and students' beliefs about EBP with larger and diverse samples.

Title:

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Keywords:

EBP beliefs, UG nursing students and collaborative practice

Abstract Summary:

This study examined how a new EBP research course with clinical collaboration affected EBP beliefs in a cohort of junior nursing students compared to senior nursing students completing a traditional research course.

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