



What do nursing students know about the homeless and their care experiences? A qualitative study



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Faculty Disclosure



We have no conflicts to report.

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Session Objectives



- Describe beginning nursing students' experiences with the homeless
- Describe beginning nursing students' perceptions of care of the homeless
- Discuss possible strategies for teaching students about homelessness based on participant recommendations

Background



- Homeless people at risk for incivility from nurses
- Homeless people experience:
 - Sub-standard care
 - Lack of compassion
- Despite limited research on students' attitudes, educators have developed strategies to
 - Increase awareness of issues associated with homelessness
 - Describe challenges faced by the homeless
 - Facilitate identification with the poor
 - Identify personal attitudes and beliefs about the homeless

Purposes



Purposes

- Explore attitudes and knowledge of nursing students regarding the homeless
- Describe nursing students' experiences with the homeless
- Examine nursing students' perceptions of nursing care of the homeless
- Identify possible strategies for teaching about care of the homeless

Theoretical Framework



Theoretical Framework

- Leininger's Culture Care Diversity and Universality Theory and Sunrise Model guided this study and data analysis

Methodology



- Design
 - Qualitative, content analysis of themes
- Setting
 - Baccalaureate nursing program in the Midwestern U.S.
- Subjects
 - Beginning nursing students (n = 19)
 - Age: 20-21 years
 - Race: Caucasian
 - Size of hometown: varied



Methodology



Procedure:

- Recruitment
 - Students in health assessment class invited to join the study.
- Interview
 - Researcher-developed tool
 - Broad, open-ended questions with specific prompts
 - Audiotaped interviews conducted in researchers' offices
- Incentive
 - \$15 gift card

Methodology



Data Analysis:

- Audiotapes and field notes transcribed verbatim
- Coding categories generated from the data
- Consensus achieved through iterative process
- Data saturation reached
- Themes examined for congruency with literature
- Trustworthiness
 - Audit trail
 - Triangulation
 - Member checking

Findings: 4 Major Themes



- Student experiences with the homeless
- Student perceptions of homelessness in general
- Student perceptions of healthcare for the homeless
- Student views of how best to teach about homelessness



Student experiences with the homeless



- Only 1 had cared for a homeless person
- Superficial experiences with the homeless
 - Giving spare change or leftover food
 - Working in a soup kitchen “in the back”
- Deep experiences with the homeless
 - Working with homeless ministries
 - Serving food to homeless people
 - Talking one on one to homeless people

Student perceptions of homelessness in general



- **Definitions of homelessness**
 - Descriptions of homeless people
 - Reasons for being homeless
- **Living rough**
 - Typical day for the homeless
 - ✦ Looking for resources: food, shelter, money, jobs
 - Typical night for the homeless
 - ✦ Frightening
 - ✦ Endangered by other people
 - ✦ Endangered by the elements

Student perceptions of healthcare for the homeless



- **Who cares for the homeless?**
 - They care for themselves
 - Clinics and hospitals
 - Friends, family and strangers
- **Barriers to care**
 - Money
 - Transportation
- **Nursing care**
 - Ideal
 - Actual



Best methods for teaching about homelessness



- **Incorporate into a traditional course**
 - Personal testimony
 - Lecture
- **Role play and simulation**
- **Cultural immersion**
- **Clinical experiences where the homeless are served**
 - Observation
 - Interviews
 - Provision of “hands on” care

Conclusions



- Nurses responsible to advocate for the homeless
- Nurses must understand issues concerning homelessness
- Students had varying amounts of experience
- Many perceptions based on stereotypes
- Students need more comprehensive education
- Few education interventions based on research, making this study a valuable contribution

Questions



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