Title:
Examining Attitudes and Beliefs About Obesity in Baccalaureate Undergraduate Nursing Students

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References:


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Abstract Summary:
This activity will provide an understanding of the negative attitudes and erroneous beliefs regarding the obese individual in undergraduate nursing students and how these attitudes and beliefs may affect nursing care. This activity will inform participants regarding the need for an obesity educational intervention during the students' educational experience.

Learning Activity:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>EXPANDED CONTENT OUTLINE</th>
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<td>The learner will be able to identify negative attitudes and erroneous beliefs held by healthcare professionals and nursing students caring for the obese client.</td>
<td>A review of the literature will be presented that will summarize the attitudes and beliefs of nurses and other health professionals caring for the obese client in the health care setting.</td>
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Abstract Text:

Abstract

Healthcare providers are aware that obesity is a major health threat and epidemic in the U.S. Based on the growing numbers of obese individuals, every nursing student can expect to provide care for at least one obese client in the clinical setting before graduation. Nurse educators must address the potential influence of societal attitudes on students’ perceptions and assist students in identifying unwarranted prejudice toward the obese client. Negative attitudes or erroneous beliefs potentially affect the quality of care provided to obese clients. The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and beliefs affecting the care of obese clients in undergraduate junior and senior nursing students. Two surveys, The Attitudes Toward Obese Persons Scale (ATOP) and the Beliefs About Obese Persons Scale (BAOP) will be used for data collection. The instruments are psychometrically sound with high internal consistency. Data processing models will include descriptive and between-group statistical procedures. Experts agree that an obesity epidemic exists (Phelan, Burgess, Yeazel, Hellerstedt, Griffin, & van Ryn, 2015). Nurses are caring for increasingly large numbers of obese clients, in outpatient and inpatient settings, who require specific care to meet their special needs. Students entering nursing programs are affected by societal attitudes that likely influence their responses to caring for obese clients. The same social messages also have an effect on professionals working in the health care setting; therefore, professionals are not immune to negative attitudes and beliefs regarding obese clients (Phelan et al., 2015). The obese, a stigmatized group, may face negative attitudes and feel unwelcome in medical settings. Additionally, obese clients may receive disparate treatment (Incollingo, 2015; Puhl, Luedicke, & Grilo, 2013). The recognition that negative attitudes and beliefs of nursing students may affect clinical judgments and hinder the quality of care of obese individuals makes this research vital to the field of nursing and nursing education. The growing numbers of obese individuals in outpatient and inpatient settings present a challenge to providers of healthcare services. Obese clients have unique needs. In addition to the concerns of respect and caring are equipment issues and various clinical concerns (i.e., drug absorption, skin breakdown, delayed wound healing, and pulmonary problems) and other obesity-related complications (Dambaugh & Ecklund, 2016; Puhl, Phelan, Nadgowski, & Kyle, 2016). Research is limited in understanding the attitudes and beliefs about obesity in undergraduate nursing students during their
formative professional education. The proposed research study will add to evidence-based nursing education, as well as address issues related to the obese population. Results of the study will help to address the gaps in current knowledge, identify negative attitudes, and potentially improve nursing care of the obese client.