Putting Nursing Students at the Helm of Health Literacy

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Abstract: Effective communication is a foundation of high-quality, patient-centered health care. Understanding health literacy is an essential attribute that health care professionals need to possess in order to promote effective partnerships with patients and their significant others. Nurses, especially, need to be involved in addressing the epidemic problem of low health literacy in the United States because they are responsible for the majority of patient, caregiver and community health education and communication. Nurses play a key role in providing health care information to individuals, families and groups in a variety of settings and therefore should be educated about the essentials of health literacy, its prevalence in society and its relationship to health outcomes. There are currently no standards for including health literacy training in the undergraduate nursing curriculum. A review of the current literature on health literacy shows no formal recommendations for how, where or how to include this topic in pre-licensure education. The research demonstrates that a gap in nursing education exists, but there has been relatively little research on health literacy and recommendation for nursing education. Results of the pilot study and actual study will be presented.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a Health Literacy Module (HeLM) on health literacy knowledge, attitudes and skills of pre-licensure nursing students using a pretest and posttest approach in order to raise awareness, build the skills and improve knowledge of health literacy and the impact on patient outcomes.

Method: Pre-licensure baccalaureate nursing students (n=180) were invited to participate in this quasi-experimental study. Students completed the health literacy questionnaire: The Health Literacy Knowledge and Experience Survey (HL-KES) as both a pretest and a post test. The classroom sessions included the researcher designed components of the HeLM which included a power point presentation, videos, active learning strategies and what to include in a patient education health literacy "toolkit".

Findings: It is the hope of the researcher that the findings will support the inclusion of a practical approach to incorporating health literacy education into the nursing curriculum.

Title:
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Keywords:
health literacy, nursing education and pre-licensure nursing students

References:


Abstract Summary:
This study evaluated the effectiveness of the Borrero Health Literacy Module (HeLM) on health literacy knowledge, attitudes and skills of pre-licensure nursing students. Pre-licensure baccalaureate nursing students were invited to participate in this study. The findings support the inclusion of health literacy education into the nursing curriculum.

Content Outline:
1. Introduction and background
   a. Health literacy
   b. Nursing Education
2. Methodology
   a. Instrument
   b. Student population
3. Results
4. Implications for future research
5. Recommendations for nursing education

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Author Summary: Joy is currently Academic Chair of her nursing department at Suffolk County community College on Long Island. She has over 30 years of clinical experience in critical care and med-surg, and has been teaching at Suffolk for 20 years in the classroom, lab and clinical settings. Her doctoral journey has led her to her join her passion for health literacy with nursing education.