

Abstract 4753

CARING FOR STUDENTS IS CARING FOR PATIENTS: ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN NURSING STUDENTS' CARING AND THE PERCEPTION OF CLINICAL MENTORS' CARING

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Abstract Body

Background. Caring is a core competence of nursing and should be acquired by undergraduate nursing students. Despite the difficulty in defining caring, it can be observed through measurable behaviours. The aims of this study were a) to investigate the association between nursing students' caring and the perception of clinical mentors' caring, and b) to assess gender and year of course differences.

Methods. This is a cross-sectional study. The sample is composed of undergraduate nursing students (n=316). Assessments were conducted with the Caring Behaviour Inventory (Factors: *Being with, Doing with competence, Responding to individual needs, Providing effective care*) and the Nursing Students Perceptions of Instructors Caring (Factors: *Supportive learning climate, Instill confidence through caring, Respectful sharing, Control vs flexibility*). Descriptive and inferential statistics were performed.

Findings. Students' caring was associated with their perception of clinical mentors' caring. A higher perception of a *Supportive learning climate* promoted *Being with* and *Doing with competence*. A higher perception of a mentor promoting *Flexibility vs control* was associated with greater *Doing with competence*. Gender and year of course differences were found. *Being with* and *Responding to individual needs* were higher in female students compared to males. *Doing with competence* and *Providing effective care* increased with the year of course while *Responding to individual needs* decreased.

Conclusion. Clinical mentors contribute to promoting caring in undergraduate nursing students. It is fundamental to cultivate a supportive learning climate and foster students' autonomy during clinical placement. Years of course and gender differences can be used to tailor educational interventions.

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