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Leadership in Nursing Scholarship, Practice and Education: how to impact nursing as a caring profession globally

Abstract: Theme paper

Title: The impact of education on developing caring values of nursing students:

Key words: humanising curriculum, caring values, nurse education.

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Background:

With the global rise in the elderly population, there are concerns about the quality of care with evidence of neglect and abuse. In particular the UK has witnessed examples of poor standards of care and in some situations a higher level than expected patient mortality.

Aim:

This paper reports the impact of an undergraduate curriculum based on a philosophy of humanisation on the values of individual student nurses. .

Methodology:

The study uses a qualitative longitudinal approach to understanding the beliefs and values of student nurses from the day of entry through their education programme to completion. Focusing on two cohorts of students one year apart, data was collected by individual interview at commencement and completion of the programme and by focus groups at the end of their first placement and at the end of their first and second years. This presentation reports up to the end of the programme for the first cohort and end of second year for the second cohort.

Findings:

Four ongoing and developing themes emerged from the data: personal journey, impact of the curriculum, impact of practice and values development. Overall, although each cohort followed two distinct curricula, there were few differences between the groups at this stage. Both groups felt they had become less judgmental, that the curriculum had empowered them to challenge practice and enhanced their confidence, and from their mentors in placement, they learned real compassion. They each recognised the complexity of caring and importance of practice that respected patient individuality.

Conclusion:

Both groups had become more articulate about consistently basing their practice upon sound values into their role as professionals and were influencing others. This study has evidenced the strong link between curriculum and its impact on the evolving values of nursing students.

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