

Research abstract

Theme paper abstract

Conference theme: Humanising healthcare education

Abstract title

Learning about the complexity of humanised care: findings from a longitudinal study of nurse students' perceptions

Abstract authors

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400-600 words excluding references

Currently 590 words including headings

Background, including underpinning literature and, wherever possible, the international relevance of the research

The rise in elderly populations with complex long-term conditions is a global phenomenon (World Health Organisation, 2011). However evidence has emerged internationally around concerns about quality of care, particularly for older people (Katz 2011; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2013). It has been argued that in target-driven care environments, there is the potential for care professionals to lose sight of the person receiving the care and focuses on task-completion, resulting in dehumanising care cultures (Galvin and Todres 2013). Educating nurse students to effectively as well as compassionately deliver complex care to vulnerable people represents considerable challenges.

Following a number of high profile examples of poor quality care in the United Kingdom (UK) (Francis 2013), health profession education providers now follow professional body guidelines that mandate that values for compassionate practice clearly underpin curricula. Limited evidence exists however, concerning the impact of this initiative over time. This paper reports on a study that evidences the impact on students of an education programme based on a humanising care philosophy in shaping the students' value base as they progress through their education programmes.

Aim(s) and/or research question(s)/research hypothesis(es) .

This paper reports on a five-phase longitudinal study exploring the impact of an undergraduate-nursing curriculum based on a humanising care philosophy on the values of individual students.

Research methodology/research design, any ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis

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 were collected by individual interview at commencement and completion 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. Ethics approval was gained for the entire project. At each stage of the process, students were formally invited to participate and on-going individual consent was gained. The audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically.

Key findings and recommendations

By the end of their first placement, both groups were very similar in the expression of their values and to some extent presented a rather negative view of their experiences. However students from both groups became more articulate in expressing their values particularly in relation to their placement experience, as they moved through their programme. Four on-going 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 each stage. Reasons for this will be discussed. Both groups felt they had become less judgmental, that the curriculum had empowered them to challenge practice and enhanced their confidence. Students also reported that their mentors (placement supervisors) role modelled authentic compassionate care in practice. Over time students' insight into the complexity of caring developed and their understanding of the importance of practice that respected patient individuality deepened. This study has evidenced the strong link between curriculum and its impact on the evolving values of nursing students.

Whilst this paper reports on a local study from one university in the UK, transferability of findings to other settings can be judged; it is argued that the insights will have resonance for nurse educators more widely as well as other health professional disciplines.

References

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Key words: (5)

- Nurse education
- Professional values
- Humanising care
- Curriculum
- Longitudinal qualitative research

3 key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme

- Nursing students were able to clearly articulate values that underpin humanised care
- This study provides evidence for the strong link between curriculum and its impact on the evolving values of nursing students

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- The curriculum is one factor in embedding humanised values in nursing students; further research is required.