

Enhancing Diabetes Education in the undergraduate-nursing curriculum

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Aims – Diabetes is a common medical condition and health care professionals should have an effective knowledge base on which to help patients manage their condition. Studies have indicated that the level of general diabetes knowledge amongst registered nurses is lacking. The aim of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of an increased programme of diabetes education within the undergraduate-nursing curriculum.

Methods – All teaching and clinical contacts related to diabetes have been mapped over the current three year undergraduate nursing curriculum. A significant proportion of the new teaching materials have been prepared and delivered by specialist nurses either currently working in or who have previously worked in the field of diabetes. One-week post an intensive day on diabetes, a sample of second year students were asked to complete a questionnaire focusing on specific aspects covered the previous week.

Results – The direct teaching contact time related to diabetes in the first two years of the new curriculum for this undergraduate nursing degree has more than doubled. 76% of the student nurses agreed with a statement that generally registered nurses are lacking in their knowledge about diabetes. The vast majority (82%) expressed increased confidence in their own understanding of diabetes following the increased programme of education. The majority of students answered questions correctly about; the pathophysiology and function of insulin and were aware of the levels of hypoglycaemia and expected normal glucose levels. All students also were aware that different insulins have various durations of action.

Conclusions – The benefit of an increased focus on Diabetes within the undergraduate nursing curriculum has improved the students understanding of the condition.