Let's Start at the Very Beginning: Use of Simulation in a Nursing Fundamentals Course

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BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

- In foundational nursing courses, students learn health assessment, beginning nursing skills, and communication strategies.
- It is also at this time that nursing students begin to learn clinical judgment skills, to provide safe and effective care in the clinical environment.
- Nursing students can develop these important skills using simulated learning experiences (SLE), prompting some researchers to recommend that SLEs be implemented early in the nursing curriculum (Henneman & Cunningham, 2005; Kalmakis et al., 2010; Kardong-Edgren et al., 2008; Stroup, 2014; Vivien et al., 2010).
- Many new-to-practice nurses experience difficulty in making sound clinical judgments (Chmil et al., 2015; Kalmakis et al., 2010; Henneman & Cunningham, 2005; Kalmakis et al., 2010; Kardong-Edgren et al., 2008; Stroup, 2014; Vivien et al., 2010).
- The development of strong clinical judgment is a priority in prelicensure nursing programs.
- SLEs have found to be effective tools for teaching beginning-level students clinical judgment (Chmil et al., 2015; Schlairet & Fenster, 2012; Weaver, 2015; Yoo & Yoo, 2003) as well as clinical competence (Kirkman, 2013; Dearmon et al., 2013; Yoo & Yoo, 2003) at the beginning of their nursing education.

PURPOSE

To evaluate a program of three simulated learning experiences (SLE) intended to develop clinical judgment as well as clinical competence in sophomore level baccalaureate nursing students enrolled in a nursing fundamentals course.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Tanner’s Integrative Model of Clinical Judgment (2006), a research-based model which describes the clinical judgment of experienced nurses served as the framework for the study.

METHOD

- A single group repeated measures design was used for the study.
- In groups of two, study participants participated in an SLE with standardized patients (SP) at weeks three, six, and nine of an 11-week semester.
- Study participants were randomly chosen to care for either the patient or the family member in the SLE, and they maintained those roles in each SLE.
- After each SLE, the study participant caring for the patient was evaluated for demonstrated clinical judgment abilities and clinical competence.
- The dimensions of clinical judgment described by Tanner (2006) as noticing, interpreting, responding, and reflecting were measured by the Lasater Clinical Judgment Rubric (LCJR; Lasater, 2007).
- Clinical competence was assessed using the Creighton Competency Evaluation Instrument (C-CEI; Hayden et al., 2014).
- Study raters reviewed video recordings of study participants caring for the patient to measure study outcomes after each simulation.

RESULTS: RESEARCH QUESTION 1

What effect does a program of three simulated learning experiences (SLE) with standardized patients (SPs) have on the development of clinical judgment skills (noticing; interpreting; responding; and reflecting) in sophomore level baccalaureate nursing students who are enrolled in a nursing fundamentals course?

<table>
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<th>C-CEI Total Mean Score</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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RM-ANOVA Results: F(2,92) = 10.79, p < .001, η² = .19

RESULTS: RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What effect does a program of three simulated learning experiences (SLE) with standardized patients (SPs) have on the development of clinical competence in sophomore level baccalaureate nursing students who are enrolled in nursing fundamentals course?

<table>
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<th>LCJR Total Mean Score</th>
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RM-ANOVA Results: F(2,92) = 11.41, p < .001, η² = .20

DISCUSSION

- The findings indicated that sophomore level baccalaureate nursing students enrolled in a nursing fundamentals course who participated in a program of three SLEs with SPs made a statistically significant improvement in clinical judgment skills as well as clinical competence from baseline to the final measurement point.
- Practical significance was supported by a large effect size.

CONCLUSION

- Simulation can be used as an effective teaching strategy to develop clinical judgment skills and clinical competence among prelicensure nursing students early in a curriculum.

REFERENCES

Please reach out to Cynthia Hambach for a complete list of references.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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