

Qualitative Study on Student Nurses' Experiences on Absenteeism

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Student absenteeism is a major concern in health care Institutions.¹ Hence the present study was undertaken to know the live experiences of nursing students.

OBJECTIVE: The objective of the study was to identify the root causes of absenteeism and its remedies among nursing students.

METHODS: Using a Phenomenological research design, through purposive sampling technique, nursing students who were studying in different nursing colleges of Kolar were selected. Then data was collected from all these students through focus group discussion and in-depth interview.

RESULTS: From the study results, five themes emerged such as Embarrassment, Dependency, Too much work load, Good relationship and Lack of freedom.

CONCLUSION: The study concludes that there is a need to address by the nurse educators with problems related to absenteeism among nursing students.

KEY WORDS: Absenteeism, Nursing students, Root causes, prevention of absenteeism.

INTRODUCTION

Indian Nursing Council is a statutory body which prescribes the syllabus and regulations for various nursing programmes and these will be implemented by schools and colleges of Nursing and health care institutions through Board and affiliated universities.² The monitoring and control of nursing student's attendance as per the syllabus is within the control of nursing institutions and each student is expected to fulfill the academic requirements and get 80% of theory and 100% of practical attendance in each subject in order to get eligibility to appear for the final examination. But in spite of having good academic monitoring such as mentoring, parent teacher meet and counseling facilities within the institution, few students

become absent.

Absenteeism can be defined as persistent habitual, and unexplained absence from school through purposive sampling technique two focus groups were made (separately for each college). Absenteeism is a major concern for lecturers at institutions of higher learning. Absenteeism creates a dead, tiresome, unpleasant classroom environment that makes students who come to class uncomfortable and the lecturer irritable. It is also an alarming problem for administrators, teachers, parents and society. This can have a negative effect on the progress of all the students attending the class. The families of habitual absenteeism also suffer with poverty and unemployment. If the student is trained properly, he or she

become a good citizen in the society especially in health care team.

A study was conducted to assess the causes of student absenteeism in selected universities of South Africa. For the study using mixed methodology and survey research design, data was collected from 1026 students. The results revealed that, student absenteeism in the universities were due to lack of subject interest, poor teaching strategies by lectures, unfavorable learning environment, too much socialization, part time jobs and poor relationship with the lectures.¹

Hence the researcher felt to undertake a study on experiences of nursing students on absenteeism in selected colleges of Kolar with an objective to find out the root causes of absenteeism and its remedies among nursing students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Research design used for the study was phenomenological research design. First an ethical permission was obtained from Institutional ethical committee and then a written permission was obtained from the head of Nursing Institutions, Kolar. For the study around 15 nursing students who were irregular for classes and clinical, having below 60% of attendance and 60% of cumulative requirements not completed, studying in 2nd, 3rd and 4th year GNM and B.Sc(N) programme, who were available at the time of data collection and willing to participate in the study were included. Through purposive sampling technique two focus groups were made (separately for each college). After obtaining formal permission from study participants, using in-depth interview method, data was collected from all students. First socio-demographic data was collected followed by questions related to absenteeism and its remedies were elicited using six open ended questionnaires. During data collection the researcher facilitated the group and her assistants, who were also nursing academics, attended all focus group discussion and helped researcher by taking notes as they verbalized and the same time recording also was

done using a tape recorder.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was, by debriefing after each focus group discussion and by listening to the tape and verifying the data. The content was verified while reading line by line and paragraph by paragraph, looking for significant statements and codes according to the topics addressed.

The researcher used three levels of coding. In level one coding, researcher examined the data line by line and making codes which were taken from the language of the subjects who attended the focus group. In level two coding, comparing of coded data with other data and creation of categories were done. In level three coding, the categories that seem to cluster together were formed as themes. Then the documents were submitted to two assessors for validation. This action provided an opportunity to determine the reliability of the coding.

RESULTS

I. Description of Socio-demographic data of nursing students

With regard to socio-demographic data, majority (82%) of nursing students were males and 18% of them were females, most (62%) of them were between 19 to 20 years of age group, 72% of them were studying B.Sc (N), 28% of them were studying in GNM programme, in that 54% of them were in 2nd year, 40% of them were in 3rd year and 6% of them were in 4th year. Among 15 members, 70% of them were selected nursing by force, 80% of them scored above 60% of marks in PUC and 98% of them were passed PUC with first attempt.

II. Causes of absenteeism:

From focus group discussion study analysis, five themes were emerged. These were embarrassment, dependency, too much work load, good relationship and lack of freedom.

Theme - I: Embarrassment

This theme emerged from all focus group that

almost all male nursing students expressed that they were embarrassed throughout the OBG postings and which made them to be absent.

One student stated that:

"When we go to the patient for giving care or doing some procedure, they tell us don't come here".

Another student added to this:

In postnatal ward one or the other patient will be feeding the child, we cannot do any procedure when we go near patient they show the faces and when we stand away from the patient, our teacher comes and scolds at us for simply standing without doing work.

One more student said:

One day I went to do bed making in OBG ward, suddenly patient got up and said don't come here, go out! This made me not to go for clinical postings.

Theme-II: Dependency

Most (80) % of the students expressed that, they are dependent on their parents or warden to plan their day to day activities failing in which they become absent.

One student stated that:

"When my father is at home he makes me to get up early from bed and send me to the college and when my father is not there, my mother won't make me to get up because she doesn't like that I have joined nursing hence I become absent".

Another student added to this;

"When I was studying in PUC and stayed in the hostel, we require to follow very strict time to get up from bed, go to the college and study time after coming here such rules are not there. Hence I don't know the time I will sleep and become absent."

One more student added to this;

"One day my teacher counseled me for becoming regularly absent, then I decided to maintain regularity, after a week while coming to college

my friends called me to go out, I went with them then I continued to become absent".

Theme-III: Too much work load

Cumulative record requirement was another issue expressed by students.

One student said that:

"We were placed in a partial block. We require to fulfill our syllabus requirement like care plan, case studies and procedure demonstration as per our cumulative record in the clinical and assignments in the class hours. Complete 8 hours we are packed (morning clinicals and afternoon classes) without a single hour to relax. Hence we are not able to cope with that, hence we become absent."

Another student added that

"Because of over work in the clinicals, I become tired then I am unable to attend afternoon Class."

Theme-IV: Good relationship

Most (76.06%) of the students expressed that teachers and parents should maintain good relationship with them and understand their feelings.

One student said that:

"My parents do not understand my feelings, they always force me to do all the activities. I am not able to share my feelings with them, because they are busy with their own work and they are not interested to listen to my words".

Another student added to this;

"Teacher should be strict, but they also should maintain friendly nature to understand problems and also they should be polite and approachable for all the students."

One more student said that:

"My parents have not given freedom for me to choose the profession as I like, they pushed me to this profession, because of lack of interest, I am skipping the classes".

Theme-V: Lack of freedom

Most (82.86%) of the students expressed that, restrictions are more in the profession and only 17.14% of them expressed that this rules are important to maintain professional dignity.

One student stated that:

Once you enter in to this profession you will lose all your freedom and will suffer a lot, like you should not put nail polish, you should not wear ornaments, you should not leave the hairs freely. This suppresses our personal interest.

Another student added to this:

"My college is like a jail, which builds up on rules and regulations"

III. Preventive remedies

With regard to preventive remedies, Majority (56.6%) of students expressed that teachers and parents working together can prevent absenteeism.

One student said that;

"Student must involve themselves in the studies by reading the books and clarifying the doubts"

Another student added to this:

"Student must be up-to-date in their studies and do not keep any work pending, it will increase the tendency to escape from the situation"

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students:

- ▶ Study systematically and regularly.
- ▶ Make a point to read the lessons beforehand.
- ▶ Keep a dictionary with you while reading.
- ▶ Develop self-confidence-it means faith in your own strength and faith in your studies.
- ▶ Have an intense desire to excel the studies.
- ▶ Study in groups with peers.
- ▶ Draw a time table from time.⁵

Nurse educators:

- ▶ Plan full block Classes or Clinicals
- ▶ Conduct counseling for students and parents regularly

- ▶ Maintain good student and teacher relationship
- ▶ Have a good time plan in the hostel and college
- ▶ Identify the absentees immediately and bring to the notice of principal and parents
- ▶ Plan test and assignments as per curriculum requirement without over loading the students

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study revealed that indiscipline, dependency, lot of expectation from teachers and parents among students, lack of co-operation and co-ordination between parents and institution, misunderstanding between parents, lack of knowledge among parents in handling adolescent children, lack of timely guidance by the teachers in the clinical and theory classes became the root causes of absenteeism among nursing students. This was supported by the study conducted by Loraine D. Cook and Austine Ezenne.⁶

CONCLUSION

Absenteeism from clinical areas and classes among nursing students is a significant problem. From the findings of the study five themes were emerged such as Embarrassment, Dependency, Too much work load, Good relationship and Lack of freedom. So the nurse educator should deal with such type of problems in order to make students to complete their education programme and to become a competent and dedicated nurse to the society.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

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Original Article

Effectiveness of Structured Teaching Program on Knowledge Regarding Biomedical Waste Management among House Keeping Staff

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: The management of biomedical waste or Hospital waste has assumed great importance the world over because of the serious hazards it poses to the environment in general and the public in particular. Although hospital waste management has become serious concern throughout the world, in India, only ten states and districts have given adequate thought to manage properly the collection and disposal of waste from hospital.

OBJECTIVES: To assess the knowledge and practice of biomedical waste Management among housekeeping staff. 2. To assess the effectiveness of structured teaching programme regarding the knowledge and practice of biomedical waste management among housekeeping staff. 3. To associate the post-test knowledge and practice score of biomedical waste management among housekeeping staff with selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY: Pre-experimental ones group pre-test and post-test design was used to study effectiveness of STP. Forty housekeeping staff in RRMCH hospital was recruited by non-probability convenience sampling method. Necessary administrative permission was obtained from concerned hospital authority. Structured interview schedule was used to elicit the baseline data and practice checklist were used to elicit the knowledge and practice of housekeeping staffs.

RESULT: The study revealed that among 40 housekeeping staff 15 (37.5%) housekeeping staff had moderately adequate knowledge, 25 (62.5%) housekeeping staff had adequate knowledge in the post-test score on biomedical waste management. There was no inadequate knowledge found in the post-test. The mean pre-test knowledge score of housekeeping staff in the hospital was 9.3, whereas the mean post-test knowledge score was 23.2. The obtained 't' value for knowledge was 16.58 (at $p < 0.05$ level). The mean pre-test practice score of housekeeping staff in the hospital was 4.6 whereas the mean post-test practice score of housekeeping staff in the hospital was 9.72. The obtained 't' value for practice was 17.5 (at $p < 0.05$ level).

CONCLUSION: The study concluded that the structured teaching programme on biomedical waste management carried out in the study was found to be effective in improving the knowledge of housekeeping staff as evidenced by the significant change between pre-test and post-test knowledge score.

KEYWORDS: Housekeeping Workers (HKW), biomedical waste management (BMW), structured teaching programme, hospital, knowledge.