

“CHANGING STUDENTS’ ATTITUDES – THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL NURSES.”



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Purpose of the study

- The study examined and explored the attitudes of 3rd year general student nurses toward people with mental health problems, on completion of their mental health secondment and a theoretical module of study.

Rationale for the study

- **Attitudes and the factors that influence change are often a major determinant of behaviour
(Baron, 1992)**
- **Awareness of general student nurses' attitudes toward people with mental illness is essential in a profession where we strive to treat all people in a holistic manner
(Chan&Cheng2001).**
- **Knowledge of attitudes will inform educators in the preparation of training programmes, setting objectives and in curriculum development
(Callaghan, 1996).**

Methodology

- Quantitative questionnaire &
- Qualitative focus group interviews.

Triangulation of methods enhances the depth of knowledge elicited but also the measurement of complex constructs such as attitudes.

(Slevin and Sines 1996).

Quantitative Data Collection



- Yuker, Block, and Campbell's (1960) attitudinal scale was used.
 - 10 items:** the characteristics of people with mental illness.
 - 10 items:** the treatment of people with mental illness
- Lowest mean score = **Negative attitudes**
High mean score = **Positive attitude.**
RESPONSE RATE = 89%

Quantitative Results: Overall Attitudinal Scores



| | MEAN SCORE | INDICATES |
|-----|---------------|------------------------|
| % | | |
| 16% | 59-69 | Moderately Positive |
| 78% | 70-89 | Positive |
| 6% | 90-101 | Very Positive |

Qualitative Data Collection



- Tape recorded, focused group interviews with 25% of the sample group.
- Explore how attitudes toward people with mental illness are formed and whether they influence practices.
- *The questions asked in the focus groups were generated from the quantitative findings.*

Qualitative Results- Interview Themes:



- ·Initial feelings on commencement of the placement.
- ·The impact of theoretical instruction.
- ·The impact of clinical instruction.
- ·How people with mental health problems are cared for in the general health system.

Findings:



Students' attitudes are influenced by knowledge of and contact with people who suffer mental health problems.



- The client contact reduced their prejudices and fears.
- The Preceptor support while on clinical placement.
- The classroom tuition during the placement helped them to contextualise their experiences in an evidence based environment.

The practical issues that students encounter in caring for people who suffer mental ill health in general hospital settings.



- Negative attitudes demonstrated by general nurses.
- Maintaining & staff patient safety.
- When caring for people with mental health needs the practices of general nurses lack evidence based knowledge.

How the student nurses felt their seconded placement has prepared them for professional practice in the general setting.

- Classroom tuition was essential in assisting the student to contextualise experience and theoretical knowledge.
- Theoretical and client contact enhanced positively influenced attitudes to people with mental health problems.

Conclusion



- **Attitudes of all health professionals toward people with mental health problems can be positively influenced by E. B. knowledge and client contact.**
- **Nurses must be cognisant that role-modelling of good practice has significant influence on students' learning and patient care .**
- **The commitment of all nurses to evidence based practices influences how people with mental health problems are perceived and cared for in the wider community.**