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Yukiko Kukimoto

Morinomiya University of Medical Sciences, Japan

Undergraduate nursing students acquire therapeutic communication skills through touch care practice

Statement of the Problem & Purpose: Nursing students may experience difficulty in establishing rapport with their patients during clinical practicum. Their interpersonal skills have become weaker because communication styles have changed. Touch care is effective in managing pain, nausea, anxiety, fatigue and insomnia and it can also aid in establishing rapport between the receiver and giver. Touch care skills might help students build better relationships with patients. The purpose of this study is to clarify that the nursing students who learned touch care have improved their communication skills with their patients during clinical rounds.

Methodology: Five junior nursing students who learned touch care (lecture and practice) were included in the study. We conducted semi-structured interviews with these students before and after their clinical practicum. Recorded interviews were transcribed and the data was analyzed with content analysis. The steps included selecting the unit of analysis, coding, grouping and categorizing.

Finding: After the students completed clinical practicum, three categories including: strengthen self-efficacy in nursing skills; deepen understanding with patients and expanding interactual effects of touching were extracted.

Conclusion & Significance: The students experienced the effects of touch care and recognized the improvement in their communication skills. Touch care was effective not only in patients who suffered discomfort, but also in students who provided it. Recommendations are made for nursing education to incorporate touch care skills into the nursing curriculum to help nursing students acquire therapeutic communication skills. The sample of this research was small and future studies should be encouraged.

Biography

Yukiko Kukimoto has completed her MSN from University of California at San Francisco. She is an Associate Professor for the nursing department at Morinomiya University of Medical Science in Osaka, Japan. She studied touch care/gentle massage at the Institute of Health and Healing of California Pacific Medical Center in the United States and practiced touch care on patients on a voluntary basis.

kukimoto@morinomiya-u.ac.jp

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