

6th World Nursing and Healthcare Conference

August 15-17, 2016 London, UK

Intuition: An important tool in the practice of nursing

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Intuition is a quality that nurses have traditionally valued, but nowadays evidence-based research climate is often denigrated. Because it is difficult to investigate and quantify, intuition has tended to be seen as unreliable, unscientific and unsuitable for nursing practice. However, intuition, like caring, cannot be subjected to measurement and should not be overlooked as an important tool.

Intuition is identified as a useful tool that needs to be recognised in nursing. At the same time, intuition is described as an important type of nursing knowledge and a valid way of knowing in clinical nursing practice. It is knowing something or deciding to do something without having a logical explanation. Intuition in practice has been linked to enhanced clinical judgement, effective decision making and crisis aversion. The inability to provide rationale for an action or decision makes intuition challenging for nurses to describe, explain or openly acknowledge. In the nursing literature, intuition is recognised as an important component of decision-making theories. Thompson (1999) outlines the two predominant theoretical approaches to decision making: the systematic positivistic approach and the intuitive humanistic approach. Both approaches are valuable and Thompson (1999) emphasises the need to investigate quantitatively the intuitive humanistic approach in decision making. To understand the intuitive approach to decision making, nurses need to first identify intuitive feelings and intuition use in their clinical practice. Qualitative studies demonstrate intuition use in expert decision making and label it as a source of knowledge coming from feelings, sensations and connections.

Intuition is a component of decision-making models applied in nursing practice. Empirical research which requires nurses to recognize intuition and utilize it effectively in nursing practice.

Biography

Aysel Özşaban is studying PhD programme in Fundamentals of Nursing Department at Istanbul University Florence Nightingale Nursing Faculty. She is working at the same department as research assistant. She worked as nurse at intensive care unit three years. She interests nursing philosophy, nursing education and intensive care nursing. She is member of Turkish Nurses Society, and Turkish Neurosurgical Nurses Society.

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