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Identifying changes in comfort and worry among pediatric nursing students following clinical rotations

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Background & Purpose: Pediatric clinical settings are stressful and anxiety-provoking environments. Previous studies indicate the greatest worry for students is causing a child pain. This study aims to replicate previous results using three different nursing programs to determine if initial results are generalizable to a greater population.

Methods: This quantitative descriptive study utilized pre-post design. The “Pediatric Nursing Student Clinical Comfort and Worry Assessment Tool” assesses students’ perceptions regarding their clinical experiences with children, and evaluates common worries associated with pediatric rotations. Acceptable initial validity and internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha of .806 for comfort and .766 for worry were obtained. Data were reviewed for missing values and outliers before analysis. Changes in subscale results were assessed using paired t-tests. A total of 250 students consented to participate with a total of 206 participants completed both pre/posttests.

Results: Significant ($p < 0.05$) improvement among participants from pre-test to post-test in all areas except “helping families/children cope with painful procedures”. Clinical comfort increased while worry decreased. Correlations between study variables, age and the number of children did not have strong relationships with clinical comfort or clinical worry. However, how often students worked with children and their comfort with children did have stronger correlations with both factors.

Conclusion: The results of this study suggest student worries are often present but also manageable. Faculty can tailor post-conferences and clinical learning opportunities to address identified areas of worry and increase clinical confidence, most notably with painful procedures. These conclusions are consistent with previous research.

Biography

Madeline Lassche teaches primarily in pediatrics and is considered an expert on pediatric respiratory and cardiovascular issues. Madeline also has expertise in writing simulation scenarios for the University of Utah, College of Nursing and Elsevier publishing. She has presented numerous times at national and international simulation conferences and is currently working with Intermountain Healthcare to deliver a local simulation facilitator course.

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