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Implications for integration of theory with clinical practice: Views of student midwives on clinical practice

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Background: Clinical learning is the acquisition of midwifery technical skills through the application of theoretical knowledge to practice in a ward as any other practicum site. It is a multidimensional process of acquiring knowledge through experience or actual practice in the clinical setting.

The aim of the study: To determine factors affecting integration of midwifery nursing science theory with clinical practice in Vhembe district, Limpopo province.

Methods: A qualitative explorative, descriptive and contextual design was used. Convenient sampling method was used to select 18 level IV (Finalists) student midwives from the following hospitals, Donald Fraser, Siloam and Tshidzini hospitals, in Vhembe district. Data were collected through three focus group interviews. Interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached and data obtained were analyzed through open coding method.

Results or findings: Factors perceived as hindering and facilitating integration of theory with clinical practice when allocated for clinical learning experience including amongst others overcrowding in clinical areas that lead to limited opportunity for clinical learning experiences. Other factors were negative attitude towards midwifery by some male students leading to lack of interest to midwifery course; poor interpersonal relationship support and feedback due to lack of accompaniment to clinical areas.

Recommendations: Planning by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which is the University and nursing colleges in Vhembe District need to meet at the beginning of each academic year to plan the clinical for allocation for placement of students to avoid overcrowding of students at the same hospital. Create career choice opportunities facilitate the creation of preceptors' positions for clinical accompaniment, so that student are accompanied every day. The midwifery curriculum need to outline and strengthen orientation program and provide students with objectives to clinical setting.

Biography

Malwela Thivhulawi has completed her Master's from the University of Venda and currently busy with PhD at the same University. She is a lecturer at the University of Venda in advanced nursing department. She has published 2 papers in reputed journals and presented in 2 international conferences.

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