

18th International Conference on

Nursing & Healthcare

December 05-07, 2016 Dallas, USA

An exploration to assess if mindfulness has a positive effect on nursing students stress when undergoing assessments

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Student nurses are required to undergo assessments both practical and theoretical to meet the requirements of the European Union (EU) Directive (2005). As a result nursing students often feel stressed and are emotionally frail. Nursing relies on reflection to gain insight into actions for improvement on future performance but could mindfulness be used to help with the immediate stressors students deal with day to day, especially during assessments? 31 students enrolled on a randomized mindfulness (M)/reflection (R) 6 week program. The students were asked to complete the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) questionnaires pre-study and post a practical exam with 3 open ended questions. Results were analyzed showing an increase in the mindfulness scores in the M group, and a small increase in the R group. Stress improved marginally in both groups. The 3 open questions analysis showed that the M Group exercise was helpful in dealing with major stressors, encouraged positive thinking and allowed time to step back from any given situation before reacting. However, there were also negative emotions highlighted with this technique. The R group acknowledged the importance of writing down their thoughts and feelings, to acknowledge emotions and ultimately realize that they have ability to achieve. Results show a possible need to assess the use of mindfulness and reflection in a combined study in the future to assess long term intervention of the skills to help deal with stressors of their daily working lives, and to put in place support for distress noted.

Biography

Moira Walker has completed her MSc in Complementary Therapies from the University of Westminster in 2015 and is hoping to commence a Mindfulness Based Teaching Course in 2016. She is a full time Lecture in BSc Hons Nursing Degree Course. She has a background in hematological transplant nursing and is a great believer in using complementary therapies to enhance allopathic medicine.

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