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A phenomenological exploration of the effects of human patient simulation on undergraduate student nurses confidence to practice in the clinical environment

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There is a growing need for undergraduate students to acquire quality placements for clinical practice. However, with the current state in healthcare, quality placements have been very hard to attain. Therefore, HPS have become the latest trend in many nursing schools in attempt to address this issue. In this study, HPS has been seen to help with confidence levels for clinical practice. However, the benefits that students' take away from the simulation based learning activities is very dependent on how the simulation is organized, structured and conducted. This notion is supported by the findings of this study. A qualitative phenomenological study design using two focus groups was used. A convenience sample of students from one educational institution; University of British Columbia (UBC) in the term three, of their undergraduate nursing degree was emailed an invitation to attend a focus group session. There were six major themes and multiple sub-themes that came about during this study that impacted how students perceived their experience with HPS in relation to clinical confidence. The major themes that were evident from the participants' experiences were classified as: Realism, building on knowledge, safe environment, critical thinking and confidence and anxiety. From this study, several conclusions can be drawn about how HPS affects undergraduate student nurses' confidence for clinical practice. Findings indicate, it is crucial to feel that the whole simulation experience depicts reality. Realism was the major theme related to clinical confidence. If the scenario was not simulating enough participants felt, they did not learn much from them. However, during times when simulations were at the optimal level, participants felt that they acquired many things, such as confidence, clinical techniques, linking theory to practice, identifying their own knowledge gaps, critical thinking, and background knowledge to help in similar cases in the actual clinical environment. It is very important that HPS is well integrated into the nursing programs so students achieve great results from the simulations, which can be done if the simulations being conducted and organized at the right times in the programs.

Biography

Harjinder Sandhu has been working at Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) since 2013. Over the years, she has taught in a variety of settings including laboratory, class and clinical. She has worked within the lab setting and enjoyed teaching with the high-fidelity simulators. In Jan 2017, she will be joining her lab team and taking on a new role as Simulation Facilitator. Her research project during Graduation at University of British Columbia was related to "Simulation education and how it affects the competence and confidence of nursing students in the clinical environment". She completed her Master's Degree in June 2012.

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