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Undergraduate students' experiences of being 'in role' in simulated nursing practice as the recipients and providers of nursing care

Background: In undergraduate nursing education things such as decreased government health budgets, higher patient acuities and increased student numbers result in a reduction in the availability and quality of clinical placements. Simulation, is an innovative educational strategy designed to address these concerns. Simulation encompasses techniques, from low fidelity role-play and scenario setting to high fidelity silicone masks to computerised manikins. All simulation however involves students engaging in role play. Role-play is not a new concept in nursing education and forms an integral part of all simulation. Students involved in role play are actively involved in the construction of their own learning hence enabling multi-level brain processing of experiences. Role-play also engages the motor and cognitive systems which, according to research allows the entire brain to be engaged in learning. Emotional learning whereby reflecting on emotional experiences and relating them back to the source of information further adds to the benefits of role play. The benefits of role play, although clearly evident rarely include a student as the recipient of nursing care. This study therefore sought to gain an understanding of the experience of participants partaking in a simulated practice programme whereby they had an opportunity to experience the roles of both the nurse and the patient within the same clinical simulation.

Methods: Grounded Theory provided an appropriate methodology to understand participants' experiences. Following ethical clearance, a 16-year-old undergraduate nursing student took part in the study. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews until saturation was reached. Data was analysed through the constant comparative method and the process of open, axial and selective coding.

Results: Four major themes: personal engagement, learning from one another, simultaneous perspectives and patient focussed care emerged from the data in this study to answer the question "What are undergraduate nurses' experiences of being in role in simulated nursing practice as the providers and recipients of nursing care."

Discussion: Through experiencing both the nurse and patient roles, participants developed the ability to consider simultaneous perspectives in nursing practice. Increased patient empathy and a deeper insight into the patient experience facilitated more patient focused care in subsequent nursing practice.

Conclusion: This mode of simulated nursing practice may provide a highly effective adjunct to year one undergraduate nursing programmes. Through experiential learning, simultaneous provider-recipient perspectives may emerge to influence and guide nursing practice toward more patient focussed care.

Biography

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