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Socio-demographic characteristics and the development of caring perception among Israeli nursing students

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Caring is a desirable competency expected of nursing students, yet the professional literature points on a decline in caring perception during the course of their studies. Socio-demographic characteristics may influence the development of caring perception as they demonstrate personal attributes that take part in the development of professional perceptions. These associations have not been explored yet. This study aimed to explore the development of caring perceptions among nursing students and its association to socio-demographic characteristics. A cross-sectional study was conducted among first-year and fourth-year nursing (n=246) students attending a Baccalaureate Nursing Education program at a major university in Israel. First-year and fourth-year students completed a questionnaire. The findings revealed that fourth-year nursing students scored higher than first-year students in their total caring perception and according to caring sub-scales. Students' age, familial status, year of study and the preference to study nursing predicted their caring perception. Nursing students develop and establish a professional caring conception as a result of their studies. However, sociodemographic characteristics seem to be important variables in this professional development. Nurse educators and clinical preceptors should consider these variables when developing curriculum and instructing students in their clinical placements.

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