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Is there any relationship between perceived stress and physical activities of undergraduate nursing students?

Aim: To examine the relationship between perceived level of stress and physical activity among junior and senior year nursing students in undergraduate program.

Methods: Cross-sectional survey was used. The study included 6 universities and colleges that offer undergraduate nursing program in Hong Kong. Convenient sampling was adopted to recruit second and final year nursing students. There were 308 students participated in the study. The self-administered questionnaire including demographic characteristics, Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and Godin-Shephard Leisure-Time Physical Activity Questionnaire (GSLTPAQ) were given to participants. Higher scores of PSS represented higher level of perceived stress. The GSLTPAQ classifies level of activity into active, moderately active and insufficiently active. The study was approved by the human subject's research ethics committee of the college. All of the participants signed informed consent forms.

Results: The mean score of PSS was 27.31/56 (SD 5.41) and 26.70/56 (SD 4.91) for year 2 and year 5 students, respectively. For weekly physical activity level, the mean score was 21.99 (SD 16.30) and 22.23 (SD 14.47) for year 2 and year 5 students, respectively. There were about half, 53% of year 2 and 47% of year 5 students classified as insufficiently active. For relationships between level of perceived stress and physical activity among the 2 groups of students, the correlation coefficient for year 2 and year 5 students were 0.084 and -0.085, respectively.

Conclusion: Previously, it was believed that senior year nursing students are facing higher level of stress due to study pressure and clinical practices. Both junior and senior nursing students perceived similar level of stress. Junior students are adapting to new life while final year students are worrying about joining the workforce after graduation. Nurse educators and universities should support the next generation of nurses to reduce the negative impact of stress and avoid living a sedentary lifestyle.

Biography

Susan Ka Yee Chow is the Associate Dean and Associate Professor of Tung Wah College. Over the past years, she has gained vast experiences in nursing education and academic program administration. She is the Associate Editor of BMC Nursing and the Editorial Board Member of Open Nursing Research. She serves as a Reviewer of various international nursing and health care journals. She has published widely in international referee journals and her research areas are nurse case management, care of patients with chronic diseases, teaching and learning of nursing students and instrument testing. Her teaching areas are community health nursing, health education and promotion and nursing research.

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