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The social capital of Israeli Jewish and Arab nursing students

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Introduction: Israeli society is made up of many different groups. Jews comprise the majority population whereas Arabs are the minority. In recent years, in light of political tension situations between Jews and Arabs, forms of intolerance appeared in wide range of actions from avoidance to hate speech in personal levels or via the social media among nursing students. This research aimed to evaluate the relationship between Arabs and Jews nursing students using the social capital components: social involvement, reciprocity, support and trust. High levels of social capital can facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit of the nursing students.

Methodology: The methodology followed involved a quantitative study using a questionnaire based on the ESS social capital questionnaire. Self-administered online questionnaire via Google Docs software sent to all first year students via email.

Results: 228 nursing students participated in the research most of them (88%) are females, 47% Jews and 53% Arabs. The results indicate low social involvement between Arabs and Jews nursing students, students reported higher trust levels in same group students than in the other group (Arabs and Jews), high levels of reciprocity in the two groups was found and high levels of support for the same group students.

Conclusions: Nursing students - Arab and Jews live and learn in multicultural society. They study together for four years, and then they will work together and with people from different ethnicities and deferent cultures. It is important and efficient to educate and work with nursing students to raise their awareness for the important of coordination and cooperation for personal and professional benefits.