Contemporary public image of the nursing profession in Saudi Arabia

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In Saudi Arabia, the nursing profession faces significant challenges including; failure to recruit high school students into nursing education, poor nursing identity, and lack of awareness about the nursing profession. The level of community awareness and public image of the nursing profession are critical to recruit and retain students into nursing education and improve nurses' sense of identity. This study aims to explore the level of community awareness and public image of the nursing profession in Saudi Arabia. We conducted a cross-sectional study with a convenient sample of 502 adults, including106 males, and 396 females; their mean age was 22.93 ± 6.76 years. Data collected included; socio-cultural data, knowledge and public image of the nursing profession, and perceived socio-cultural barriers to pursue a nursing career. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. Half of participants had a knowledge score below 50.0 out of 100, with a median score of 50. Only, about than one-third preferred to get nursing care by Saudis. The nursing profession was not viewed as a respected job, as 71.5% of participants would be ashamed of having a nurse in their families. The study highlighted a number of socio-cultural barriers to pursue a nursing career including; the gender-mixed working environment (35.9%), delayed marriage of female nurses (20.3%), and the negative effect of nursing profession on social life (64.5%). In conclusion, the poor knowledge about the nursing profession, and the perceived sociocultural barriers about the nursing care and nursing career are the main factors contributing to the negative public image of the nursing profession in Saudi Arabia. Understanding these factors is the key to implementing focused intervention to improve the negative stereotype of the nursing profession among Saudis.

Biography

Abrar AlAmrani is a Ph.D student at York University, Canada. She has completed her master's degree in Queen's University in the United Kingdom in Advanced Nursing Practice. Her research interest is in knowledge translation and critical care nursing.