ABSTRACTS FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Effect of Psychiatric Clinical Posting on Attitudes among Student Nurses in Universiti Malaysia Sabah

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Background: Students taking up nursing course bring with them stereotypes and prejudice towards mentally-ill clients. Nurses harbouring such stigmatising attitude can have a profound effect on their subsequent therapeutic relationship and quality of care rendered for the mentally-ill clients. Typically, students who harbour stigmatising views, develop positive mindset after psychiatric posting. **Objective:** The purpose of this study was to examine whether attitudes towards psychiatric clients improved after psychiatric clinical posting intervention. **Method:** This is a quasi-experimental study, designed to compare change in attitude among a cohort of nurses before and after psychiatry clinical posting. The study involved a convenient sample of all 51 Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) nursing students in their fifth semester undergoing psychiatric postings in Hospital Mesra Bukit Padang, Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. A validated instrument, the Mental Health Nursing Questionnaire was used for pre-post posting assessment. Data collection was done at 2 intervals (T_0 and T_1), at day 1 and on the last day (day 15) of student's posting. Paired t-test was used to analyse the difference in the attitudes between day 1 and day 15. **Results:** The nursing students had high scores on negative and positive attitude factors on day 1. On day 15, among 5 negative attitude factors, there was a significant positive change in the stereotype factor. **Conclusion:** Nursing students' placement in psychiatry setting reduces stigmatising attitudes, and as such, psychiatric posting need to remain as an essential practicum requisite incorporated into all levels of nurse training curricula.