

Academic Challenges in Nursing Research & Practice in Light of COVID-19

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Abstract: COVID-19 highlights nurses' vulnerability as backbone to health services worldwide. This pandemic disease has resulted in remarkable challenges of nursing research and practice worldwide. During this period, two key aspects became apparent: the value of a highly trained clinical care nurse and the importance of research to understand the disease and identify effective treatments. Challenges facing nursing in research include: Obtaining informed consent from patients, conducting research during COVID 19, the wearing of personal protective equipment, impairing communication, and ethics. In nursing practice these challenges include ineffective communications, discrimination, inadequate knowledge, deficient practical skills, social distancing between nursing students, the experience, moving forward, support the transition of new nurses, protect nursing students and new graduates, balance between theory and practice, blended learning, cultural competence.

Academic Challenges in Nursing Research in Light of Pandemic COVID 19

The world is facing unprecedented challenges in the face of a global pandemic. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has, to date, killed thousands worldwide. The data related to numbers of tests administered, positive cases, hospitalizations, and deaths, changes on an hourly basis. During the COVID-19 health crisis unfolded, several challenges to responding effectively became evident. Three of these challenges to illustrate how nursing research provides answers during crises: restricted access to health care, surging demand for health care personnel, and the moral distress that health care providers face. (World Health Organization, WHO, 2020; Dewart, et al., 2020).

Obtaining informed consent from patients is challenging because of the difficulty of conveying information in a noisy, disruptive environment in time-critical situations and with high levels of parental anxiety. Wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) impairing communication. In addition, patients are often eligible for multiple research studies, requiring the provision of multiple participant information sheets and the challenge of discussing and obtaining consent for several studies and case reporting (Dewart, et al., 2020).

Nursing ethics research suggests that having a positive ethical climate and institutional support for dealing with ethical issues are key elements to managing ethics stress and ethical concern. Then, there are the additional challenges associated with conducting research during COVID-19, reflecting

the anxiety for families of a diagnosis associated with COVID-19. To limit virus transmission, most ambulatory providers converted to telehealth encounters instead of in-person encounters. The field of telehealth first emerged as an approach to expand access to patients in remote settings. The research showed that telehealth may be as effective as face-to-face (Morley, et al., 2020 Jia, et al. 2020).

Academic Challenges in Nursing Practice in Light of Pandemic COVID 19

With nurses at the front line of patient care, they are excellently placed to identify gaps in clinical practice and develop ideas and strategies for improving the health care needs of patients and the quality of care given to patients. Unlike classroom education, clinical training in nursing occurs in a complex clinical learning environment which is influenced by many factors. This environment provides an opportunity for nursing students to learn experimentally and to convert theoretical knowledge to a variety of mental, psychological, and psychomotor skills which are of significance for patient care (Dewart, et al., 2020).

So there are challenges in student practice during COVID 19 periods. Identifying problems and challenges with which these students are faced in the clinical learning environment can help stakeholders solve these problems and contribute to them becoming professional. These challenges include: Improper Treatment. Students encounter some challenges in dealing with clinical learning environment and in interaction with instructors, patients, and department personnel. Many students stated that they had the most interactions with the instructors and believed that the way an instructor treats a student affects

their exposure to clinical learning environment (Shu-Ching, et al., 2020).

The Experience: The move to online education has required faculty make changes to examination procedures and grading practices while implementing strategies to foster student engagement. The challenge to provide relevant clinical experiences has resulted in an increased use of simulation, telehealth and virtual reality while being sensitive to regulatory requirements stipulated by state or country boards of nursing. Although these resources are available, nurse faculty has been challenged by availability of resources not all academic institutions have needed technology and are regulatory requirements. Fortunately, some regulatory bodies have altered the percentage of direct patient care student contact hour consequent to COVID-19 (Goni-Fuste, 2020).

Support the transition of new nurses: Transitioning into the workforce is typically a significant challenge for new graduates because of the complexity of health care, the ever-increasing acuity of patients, and their limited practice experience. During the pandemic, nursing graduates are entering a health care system that is volatile and overwhelmed; this will not only add to the challenges they experience but has the potential of increasing the spread of the infection if supports are not in place. This is a joint service/education issue that requires an immediate collaborative, national transition support plan between governments, nursing education, and nursing services (Shu-Ching, et al., 2020).

Protect nursing students and new graduates: To ensure the safety and future capacity of our nursing workforce, protecting nursing students and nursing graduates is paramount. Although young people typically experience a milder course of COVID-

19, if infected they are liable to spread the infection to others including the vulnerable patients they care for. This will magnify the infection rate and increase mortality. Moving Forward: A typical first response to the COVID-19 experience may be to add or reinforce content about infectious diseases to the curriculum. In fact, this is what the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (2020) has suggested: Minimally, topics such as surveillance and detection, isolation, quarantine, and containment, and proper hand washing, cough and respiratory etiquette should be addressed (Al-Arshani, 2020).

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