

Nursing Students' Opinions Regarding the Nursing Process

Serpil SÜ¹

¹*Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Health Science, Department of Nursing*

Abstract: *The aim of this descriptive study is to identify nursing students' opinions regarding the nursing process. Data of the study conducted in January 2014 on 240 students studying in the first, second and third classes of a nursing department of a university were collected using a questionnaire consisting of 17 questions in total. The data obtained as a result of the study were analyzed using numeric and percentage distribution in computer environment. It was found that 50% of the students in the study identified the nursing process as providing appropriate nursing care specific to the patient, 73.3% had difficulties in the nursing process, and 36.2% pointed the lecturer to be the source of difficulty. On the other hand, students stated that the nursing process was beneficial to students by increasing knowledge (45.8%) and to patients by preventing lack of care (58.2%). The result of this study suggests that students who find the nursing process useful for both the patient and themselves and who have difficulty in all phases of the nursing process should apply the nursing process on more cases.*

Keywords: *nursing, nursing process, nursing student, nursing education*

I. Introduction

The nursing process is a method requiring critical thinking, enabling to find solutions based on scientific approaches to problems threatening health of a patient, which is the basis of providing care [1,2,3]. According to World Health Organization (WHO), the nursing process is to use scientific problem solving method systematically in terms of patient benefit in nursing care [1].

The application of the nursing process for health care needs to a healthy or ill individual enables to provide correct and effective nursing care [4]. The five basic stages of the nursing process include assessing the patient's condition, identifying nursing diagnoses, implementing nursing interventions, and evaluating nursing outcomes [2,5]. The nursing process that provides individualized nursing care reduces the risk of being incomplete, inadequate, and inaccurate, maintains the continuity of care, and increases the occupational satisfaction by giving the nurse the opportunity to practice different roles [6]. Also, it provides resources for nursing education and research, gives nurses critical thinking skills, and improves communication among team members [7,8,9].

The nursing process, which enables nursing students to identify the problems of the patient and develop solutions to solve these problems, forms the basis for nursing education [10,11]. Knowledge and skills about the nursing process used as an educational tool in nursing education are acquired in nursing education. The nursing process is applied in almost all nursing schools at the level of bachelor degree in Turkey. Students complete the nursing process in classes, nursing skills laboratories and mostly with clinical internships. Concerns remains for students learning and employing the nursing process, identifying nursing diagnoses accurately and appropriate nursing interventions [12]. Considering the studies on students' use of the nursing process; it is seen that students' knowledge of the nursing process is not at the desired level [13], students experience difficulties in identifying the nursing diagnoses [14] and they can not apply the stages of the nursing process at the desired level [14,15,16,17,18,19,20].

Despite the fact that the nursing process is applied in all of the nursing education schools in our country, there are still problems in this subject and the number of studies working on these problems is very small. This study was planned on the basis of these facts and that the results of the study would contribute to the literature on use of the nursing process in nursing education.

II. Method

2.1. Purpose and Type of Research

This descriptive study was carried out with the aim of specifying the opinions about the nursing process of nursing students attending a state university.

2.3. The Universe and Sampling of Research

The research in the Department of Health Sciences of a State University in Konya in January, 2014, was conducted with 240 students that are the second, third, and fourth year students who had nursing process training and using the nursing process in clinical practice. First grade students were excluded from the sampling because of the reason that they do not receive nursing process training and do not go to clinical practice.

2.4. Collecting Research Data

The data of the study were collected via a questionnaire. The questionnaire prepared by the researcher as a result of literature review; was formed from a total of seventeen questions; seven questions exploring sociodemographic characteristics, five questions about difficulties when using the nursing process and five questions asking students' opinions on the nursing process. Students who agreed to participate in the survey completed the questionnaire in approximately 15 minutes.

2.5. Ethics of Research

The approval to conduct the research was obtained from Faculty of Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Investigations Ethics Committee of Selçuk University and written permission was obtained from Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Before the questionnaire study was conducted, purpose of the research was explained briefly so the principle of "Informed Consent" was followed, the principle of "Autonomy" by stating that students can withdraw from the questionnaire whenever they wanted, and the principle of "Privacy and Protection of Privacy" by informing the students that the personal information would be protected after sharing with the researcher.

2.6. Evaluation of Data

Assessment of the data obtained was made using SPSS (Statistical Package For Social Sciences) in computer environment. Numeric and percentage distribution method was used for the evaluation of the data.

III. Results

Sociodemographic characteristics of the students participating in this study shows that 77.9% of the students were in the age range of 20-22 years, 78.8% of them were women, 42.1% were second year students, 98.8% were single, 95.8% had the nursing process training and 95.4% applied the nursing process during their education, 73.3% had difficulties while using the nursing process, and the most difficult course was the internal medicine nursing course with a ratio of 49.6% (Table 1).

Table 1: Specifications of the nursing students (n:240)

Specifications	n	%
Age		
17-19	25	25.7
20-22	70	72.2
23 and above	2	2.1
Gender		
Female	189	78.8
Male	51	21.2
Grade		
2	101	42.1
3	71	29.6
4	68	28.3
Marital Status		
Single	237	98.8
Married	3	1.2
The Nursing Process Theoretical Training Status		
Yes	230	95.8
No	10	4.2
Applying the Nursing Process During Education		
Yes	229	95.4
No	11	4.6
Having Difficulties While Using The Nursing Process		
Yes	177	73.3
No	63	26.7
Courses Presenting Difficulties (n:240)		
Basic Principle	36	15.0
Internal Medicine Nursing	119	49.6
Surgical Nursing	23	9.6
Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing	30	12.5
Mental Health	32	13.3
Total	240	100

When students having difficulties are investigated according to stages of the nursing process, the results show that 48.3% of them, sometimes, have problems in data collection stage, %52.1 in identifying nursing diagnosis, 43.8% in determining etiology of nursing diagnosis, 42.1% in selecting definitive criteria of nursing diagnosis, 43.3% in developing aims of nursing care, 50.8% in defining result criteria, 45.8% in planning nursing interventions, 42.9% in applying planned nursing interventions, 41.9% in evaluating applied nursing interventions while 35.8% of them are frequently experiencing problems in prioritizing the nursing diagnoses (Table 2).

Table 2: Students' status encountering difficulties through the stages in the nursing process

Difficulty Stages	Always		Frequently		Sometimes		Never	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Data collection	34	14.2	65	27.1	116	48.3	25	10.4
Determining nursing diagnosis	24	10.0	67	27.9	125	52.1	24	10.0
Identifying etiological factors	24	10.0	78	32.5	105	43.8	33	13.8
Selecting definitive criteria	19	7.9	80	33.3	101	42.1	40	16.7
Prioritizing diagnoses	28	11.7	86	35.8	83	34.6	43	17.6
Developing the nursing care aims	22	9.2	78	32.5	104	43.3	36	15.0
Defining result criteria	23	9.6	67	26.7	122	50.8	31	12.9
Planning interventions	14	5.8	82	34.2	110	45.8	34	14.2
Applying planned interventions	26	10.8	77	32.1	103	42.9	34	14.2
Evaluation	29	12.1	60	25.0	99	41.2	52	21.7

The distribution of students' opinions about the nursing process was shown in Table 3. According to students' statements, 36.2% of them are experiencing difficulties in using the nursing process because of their instructor, 50.0% of them defined the nursing process as providing appropriate individualized nursing care for patient, 45.8% think it is beneficial for students in order to increase their knowledge by comprehensive thinking, 58.2% think it prevents lack of care given as benefit to patients.

Table 3. Distribution of nursing students' opinions about the nursing process

Students' Opinions	n	%
Reasons for having difficulties (n:141)		
Instructor	51	36.2
Patient Attitude	30	21.3
Lack of Experience	41	29.1
Other	19	13.4
What is the nursing process? (n:128)		
Providing appropriate individualized nursing care for patient	64	50.0
Process containing data collection, diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation	39	30.4
Training given until being discharged from hospital	17	13.3
Tormenting students	8	6.3
Benefits of the Nursing Process to Students (n:164)		
Knowledge enhancement through comprehensive thinking	75	45.8
Facilitate ease of patient care	51	31.1
Increase professional satisfaction	15	9.1
Increase communication skills	11	6.7
No benefits	12	7.3
Benefits of the Nursing Process to Patients (n:151)		
Prevents inadequate care	88	58.2
Increase patient satisfaction	40	26.5
Confidence in healthcare staff increases	16	10.6
No benefits	7	4.6

IV. Discussion

In this study with nursing students, it was determined that nursing students have problems while using the nursing process during their training and they find the nursing process beneficial for both the patient and themselves. Study shows that 95.8% of the students received theoretical training related to the nursing process and 95.4% of them used the nursing process during their education. In a study conducted by Keski and Karadag on senior students, 97.9% of the students were theoretically trained in the nursing process and 96.3% of them were using the nursing process in their clinical practice [18], similar to our findings. Similarly, in the study of Şendir and his colleagues, 63.3% of the students stated that the same emphasis on the nursing process was placed throughout all applied courses [11].

73.3% of the students have difficulty while using the nursing process. When difficulties according to stages of nursing process are examined, the rates of experiencing difficulties sometimes in data collection, determination of nursing diagnosis, determination of etiology of nursing, determination of descriptive criteria of nursing, development of nursing care goals, determination of outcome criteria, planning of nursing interventions, application of planned nursing interventions varied between 41.2% and 52.1%. It was also found that 35.8% of the students had difficulty frequently in prioritizing the nursing diagnosis. In the study of Keski and Karadag, it was found that more than half of the students had problems at all stages when using the nursing process, and students lack adequate knowledge related to all stages of the nursing process [18]. In a similar study, the hardest stages of the nursing process for students were diagnosis and planning stages [11]. Yılmaz and friends found that students had the most difficulty in data collection (22.7%) and diagnosis (22.7%) [21]. In a study conducted by Kyrkjebø and Hage on students, the students reported that they knew the nursing process but

had problems in practice [22]. In another study conducted to determine students' opinions about the nursing diagnosis and their ability to use nursing diagnoses, 76.9% of the students knew what the nursing diagnosis was, but 31.5% of the students stated that they had difficulty expressing care needs of patient as the nursing diagnosis [23]. When other studies on the same subject are observed, it can be seen that 71.5% of the students identified the nursing diagnosis incorrectly [7], despite the correct identification of the nursing diagnosis they used insufficient data to determine the nursing diagnosis, [12], and they could not perform the nursing process stages at the desired level [13,14,15,16,17,19,20]. These results support the study findings.

When asked why they had difficulty in using the nursing process, 36.2% of the students indicated that instructor was the most complicating reason. In a similar study, 52.3% of the students stated the reason as varying expectations of instructors because of differences between caring plans in Nursing Principals, Internal Medicine Nursing and Surgical Nursing classes, and 50.0% as using different data collection forms in every class [24]. During nursing education, the instructors have responsibilities such as ensuring that every student understands the nursing process [21]. However, in Turkey, most of the time instructors can not spend enough time for each student because of the large number of students in classes. In addition, there are inconsistencies among instructors in reflecting the nursing process to patient care. It is thought that the result of the study is related to these reasons.

In this study, 50.0% of the students defined the nursing process as providing appropriate individualized nursing care for patient, 58.2% supported the idea that it is beneficial for patients as it prevents inadequate care. In the study of Amoura and Healila, students noted that nursing diagnosis is a primary subject and it should definitely be used in clinical practices [25]. Studies exploring students' opinions about the nursing process show; 65.9% of the students believe that the nursing process should be used in patient care [21], 64.8% think that the aim of the nursing process is qualified and individualized care of patients [26] and 80.2% of them think that the nursing process increases the quality of care [24]. Similarly, in the study of Şendir et al., 80.7% of the students supported the findings by expressing that the nursing process provides care to individuals according to their needs in an integrative view [11]. Application of the nursing process on healthy or ill individual yields correct and effective nursing care [4]. It is considered that this literature knowledge would effect students in a positive way as they will use the nursing process after graduation.

When benefits of the nursing process to students were asked, 45.8% of the students replied "Improving knowledge through comprehensive thinking". The nursing process that gives professional identity to the nursing profession is a dynamic process that is planned and implemented and assessed peculiar to individual/family, which requires scientific thinking and research [3]. It is a dynamic structure in which systematic application of problem-solving initiatives using critical thinking and providing the highest possible level of involvement of all health-related practices of the individual [1]. It is known that the nursing process steps improve the critical thinking skills of students [27]. In Wang et al.'s study, the integration of problem-solving methods into the nursing process has led to the development of problem-solving abilities in students' nursing records [28]. Again in a similar study, 78% of the students stated that the nursing process gave the nurse a habit of critical thinking [11]. These results supporting our findings can be interpreted as the development of critical thinking skills of students using the nursing process.

V. Conclusion

In this study conducted in a nursing department of a university, it is found that nursing students had difficulty in using the nursing process during their training, they think that the nursing process provides proper care for patient and increases knowledge of student.

Accordingly, it is recommended to increase the number of theoretical classes in nursing curriculum, to apply the nursing process on more patients in clinical practice, to increase the number of case discussions in small groups, to decrease the number of students per instructor, to guide students in better ways, to agree on all hands about the nursing process and to use the nursing process widely during students' clinical practice in hospitals.

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