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Impact of Prior Healthcare Experience on Self-Reported Confidence and Competency Among Third Year Clinical Nursing Students

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Recommended Citation

Bukoski, Conrad N. and Fuvich, Jennifer, "Impact of Prior Healthcare Experience on Self-Reported Confidence and Competency Among Third Year Clinical Nursing Students" (2015). *Senior Honors Projects*. Paper 425.

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Title

Prior Healthcare Experiences and Self-Reported Confidence and Competency in Third Year Clinical Nursing Students

Major

Nursing

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Nursing

Date

5-2015

Keywords

Nursing Education, Confidence, Competence, Clinicals, Healthcare, Experience

Abstract

There is a long-running debate amongst nurse educators if prior healthcare experience facilitates or encumbers a nursing student's clinical training and education. Nursing students with prior healthcare experience have often worked as home health aids (HHAs), certified nursing assistants (CNAs), patient care technicians (PCTs), emergency medical technicians (EMTs), electrocardiogram technicians (EKG tech), student nurse associates (SNAs), and paramedics. The psychomotor and cognitive nursing skills utilized in these healthcare positions vary and some overlap with nursing skills. All of these positions interact with other healthcare positions to deliver patient care.

Some educators feel that inadequate skills and training may be acquired necessitating additional proper training. Other educators feel that the skills and behaviors gained create a more confident and competent student, thus allowing them to focus on higher didactic concepts. To date, there is no analytical data in the literature illuminating this debate. The aim of this project was to explore if nursing students, who have worked in prior healthcare, are more confident and competent in their nursing school career compared to students with no prior healthcare experience.

To properly assess the confidence and competence of nursing students at The University of Rhode Island, College of Nursing, an IRB-approved methodological study was constructed. The study was modeled after the Nurse Professional Competency Scale, a validated and published tool measuring confidence and competence of nursing students prior to graduation based off of the World Health Organization professional competencies.

The tool had several sections and collected demographics, prior healthcare experience, self-assessment of skills, and a self-reported grade section.

After recruitment of subjects among second semester junior nursing students attending a lecture, the electronic tool was distributed via a secure Survey Monkey link. Out of the 110 students registered for

the class, 73 were present in the classroom. Sixty-eight volunteered to participate in the survey and 67 completed the survey.

The resultant data was statistically analyzed for covariates by performing ANCOVA in SPSS. Our examination showed that there were no correlations between prior healthcare experience, confidence, and competence among the third year clinical students. Additional studies are needed to properly explore the importance of prior healthcare experience in nursing pedagogy.