

Opinions of Senior Nursing Students On Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice

Hemşirelik Bölümü Son Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Ruh Sağlığı ve Hastalıkları Hemşireliği İntern Uygulamasına İlişkin Görüşleri

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SUMMARY

Objectives: The aim of this study was to determine opinions of senior nursing students on psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice.

Methods: The data of the study, which was conducted with 66 senior nursing students, was collected using "Assessment Form of Senior Nursing Students' Opinions on Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice," which was developed by the researchers. The data were assessed through frequency distributions.

Results: Of the students, 42.4% stated that psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice improved their communication and problem-solving skills; 45.5% stated that it increased their self-esteem levels; 39.4% stated that it developed their skills of a holistic approach to patients; 39.4% stated that it improved their skills of intervention for patient.

Conclusion: Psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice helps students feel competent in individual and professional terms.

Keywords: Intern program; nursing education; opinions.

ÖZET

Amaç: Bu çalışma hemşirelik bölümü son sınıf öğrencilerinin ruh sağlığı ve hastalıkları hemşireliği intern uygulamasına ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Bu araştırma hemşirelik bölümü son sınıfta okuyan 66 öğrenci ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen "Hemşirelik Bölümü Son Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Ruh Sağlığı ve Hastalıkları Hemşireliği İntern Uygulaması Hakkındaki Görüşlerini Değerlendirme Formu" ile toplanmıştır. Veriler, yüzdelik dağılımlarla değerlendirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Öğrencilerin %42.4'ü ruh sağlığı ve hastalıkları hemşireliği intern uygulamasının iletişim ve problem çözme becerilerini geliştirdiğini, %45.5'i benlik saygılarında artış sağladığını, %39.4'ü hastaya bütüncül yaklaşım becerilerini geliştirdiğini, %39.4'ü hastaya müdahale becerilerini geliştirdiğini ifade etmişlerdir.

Sonuç: Ruh sağlığı ve hastalıkları hemşireliği intern uygulaması; öğrencilerin bireysel ve mesleki anlamda yeterli hissetmelerine katkı sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: İntern programı; hemşirelik eğitimi; görüşler.

Introduction

Nursing education is a theoretical and practical training that includes learning and teaching experiences.^[1-3] The goals of nursing education are (a) to make students have professional nursing characteristics, (b) to prepare students properly for their professional lives, and (c) to educate nurses—while aware of their duties and responsibilities towards their country, have already comprehended the importance of protecting and maintaining health and can respond to the existing health problems.^[1-4] Education plays an important role in the effective implementation of nursing services. Moreover,

searching for quality in nursing education is still ongoing.^[5] Various education models are being discussed to improve nursing education in Turkey as well as in the world.^[6] Among these models, the most commonly applied are clinical teaching based programs. Clinical teaching is becoming an important component in nursing education. The aim of clinical teaching is to help students integrate theoretical information into their practice skills and acquire appropriate qualifications.^[7] Today, intern practice programs are offered in nursing education. Students can integrate the information and skills that they have obtained during their educational process to prepare for their graduation more effectively in their senior years. These also enable students to observe problems that they may encounter in an actual working environment comprehensively and to gain intervention experience. In this respect, psychiatric nursing intern practice programs can help nursing students gain skills of providing care for patients with mental disorders. Studies conducted in countries where these programs are applied emphasize that intern programs make positive contributions to the individual and professional development of students,^[8] prepares students for professional roles,^[9] develops professional competence,^[10] and integrates theoretical skills and practice.^[11]

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Studies assessing the effects of intern practice on nursing education are available in the literature.^[12,13] However, in these studies, the effect of intern practice on nursing education was assessed in general. In this study, the effect of intern practice in the field of psychiatric and mental health nursing was assessed. The determination of psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice's contribution to the development of skills in providing care and intervention for individuals with mental disorders can contribute to the planning of psychiatric nursing education programs in the future. Therefore, the quality of care services provided in psychiatry clinics can be improved.

The study was conducted with the goal of obtaining opinions of senior nursing students on psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice.

Material and Method

The study was conducted as a descriptive research.

Study Environment

The study was conducted on students studying in the Department of Nursing of Faculty of Health Sciences at Erciyes University at the end of the Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice during the 2012–2013 education period. Integrated education program is applied in the institution. It is mandatory for senior nursing students to take the course of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice. In the integrated education, subjects relating to interpersonal communication are taught in the first and second years of study. Subjects relating to psychiatric and mental health nursing are taught in the third year of study. Prior to the intern practice, students perform short-term practices in psychiatry and oncology clinics in the third year of study. Focus in the practice of psychiatry is on the acquisition of basic skills in psychiatric nursing, and in oncology clinics on the acquisition of skills in consultation liaison in psychiatric nursing.

The intern practice continues for a total of 30 weeks, of which 15 are in the fall semester and 15 are in the spring se-

mester of the fourth year in undergraduate education of the Department of Nursing in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Erciyes University. The 30-week program is carried out as five-week modules in six fields including internal medicine nursing, psychiatric and mental health nursing, public health nursing, pediatric nursing, obstetric and gynecological nursing, and surgical disease nursing. Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice is offered in the fall semester of every academic year.

In this study, 66 students, divided into three groups of 22 students each, who took the psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice course in the fall semester of the 2012–2013 academic year, participated in the practice for four days of the week for five weeks. Each group (22 students) that took Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice practiced in the psychiatry clinic of Erciyes University Gevher Nesibe Hospital (10 days) and in Mehmet Kemal Dedeman Oncology Hospital (10 days). In this practice, the students discussed regularly the nursing care plans, as well as the observations and interview reports of patients whose care was theirs with their instructor responsible for the practice. Senior nursing students discussed cases which they prepared in groups with their instructor once a week. The students participated in case discussions and treatments that were held once a week in the psychiatry clinic in which all of the team members participated.

Sample of the Study

The universe sample of the study consisted of 80 students continuing the program of psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice in the fall semester of the 2012–2013 academic year. A sample selection was not made. The data were collected from 66 students who agreed to participate in the study and were continuing the practice. Of the universe, approximately 82.5% were contacted.

Criterion For Not Being Included

Nursing students who were absent from the practice at the rate of 20% were not included in the study.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the students (n=66)

Sociodemographic characteristics	Number	Percentage
Sex		
Female	51	77.3
Male	15	22.7
Age (year)		
20–22	51	77.3
23–24	15	22.7
Working status		
Working	13	19.7
Not working	53	80.3
Total	66	100.0

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected using “Assessment Form of Senior Nursing Students’ Opinions on Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing Intern Practice” developed by the researchers based on course objectives and the literature. The questionnaire had asked open-ended questions in order to determine the demographic characteristics of students and their opinions on the intern practice. The students filled out the form in a class setting after the finish of practice.

Limitations of the Study

The lack of determination of students’ personality charac-

teristics, their satisfaction, and expectation levels is the limitation of the study.

Data Analysis

The data were assessed in SPSS 16.0 package program using number and percentage distributions.

Ethical Dimension of the Study

An academic board decision was obtained from the Faculty of Health Sciences of Erciyes University to conduct the study. Ethics Committee approval was received from the Drug Investigation Local Ethical Committee of Dean of

Table 2. Opinions on contributions of psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice to students (n=66)

Contributions of intern practice	Number	Percentage
Contribution to the preparation of nursing profession		
It improved my communication and problem solving skills	28	42.4
It helped me improve myself in the preparation for profession	21	31.8
It improved my self-confidence	9	13.6
It enabled me to develop a holistic point of view	8	12.2
Contribution to the personal development		
It boosted my self-esteem	30	45.5
It improved my communication skills	26	39.3
It enabled me to use professional language	10	15.2
Contribution to the patient-nurse interaction		
It enabled me to develop a holistic approach to individuals and realize that they are precious	26	39.4
It improved my skills at helping patient	20	30.3
It improved my professional communication and observation skills	20	30.3
Contribution to the problem solving skills		
It enabled me to improve my problem solving skill	25	37.9
It helped me consider factors that cause problems	23	34.9
It enabled me to react appropriately to behaviors	18	27.2
Total	66	100.0

Table 3. Opinions on contributions of psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice to students’ skills (n=66)

	Number	Percentage
Contributions to his or her skill at working with nursing care plan		
It improved my intervention skills	26	39.4
It developed my skills at writing a care plan	18	27.3
It enabled me to develop objectives	14	21.2
It developed my skills at practicing with a care plan	8	12.1
Contribution to make observation and reporting		
It improved my observation and writing skills	44	66.7
It improved my skill at understanding patients’ behaviors and the underlying causes of them	22	33.3
Contribution to have an interview and reporting		
It enabled me to use effective communication techniques	28	42.4
It helped me realize why I should take patient statements into consideration	23	34.8
It enabled me to understand that I should make preparations before having an interview	15	22.8
Contribution to the skill at giving mental state examination to patients with any physical diseases		
It enabled me to comprehend the importance of mental state evaluation in individuals with physical diseases	34	51.5
It helped me learn how the mental state of an individual with physical disease should be evaluated	17	25.8
It helped me to learn how the feeling, opinion, and behaviors of an individual provided with care were considered	15	22.7
Contribution to the skill at giving mental state examination to patients with any mental disorders		
It helped me understand the feeling, opinion, and behaviors of patients with mental disorders	30	45.4
It enabled me to develop a critical point of view	24	36.4
It helped me realize that nurses have important roles in the development of patient	12	18.2
Total	66	100.0

Faculty of Medicine at Erciyes University. The purpose of study was explained to the students involved and their verbal consents were obtained.

Results

The mean age of students involved in the study was found to be 21.4 ± 1.2 (min: 20.00–max: 24.00). Of the 66 students, 77.3% were found to be in the age group 20–22, 77.3% to be female and 80.3% not to work at any jobs (Table 1). Of the students, 42.4% stated that mental health and disorders nursing intern practice developed their communication and problem solving skills in the preparation process for nursing profession; 45.5% stated that it contributed to the development of self-esteem in terms of personal development; 39.4% stated that it improved their holistic approach skills in patient-nurse interactions and enabled them to realize that patients are precious; 37.9% stated that it improved their problem-solving skills (Table 2).

Of the 66 students, 39.4% stated that it contributed to the improvement of their intervention skills in working with nursing care plan; 42.4% stated that it contributed to the use of effective communication methods; 34.8% stated that it enabled them to realize why patient statements should be taken into consideration; 51.5% stated that they understood the importance of mental state evaluation for individuals with any physical diseases; 45.4% stated that it enabled them to understand the feeling, opinion, and behaviors of patients with mental disorders (Table 3).

Discussion

In many educational institutions for nursing, curricula from the past have been changed by today's efforts to develop better education.^[5,12] Intern practices are a result of this pursuit in nursing education.

Students stated that intern/senior practices enabled them to feel ready for professional roles, helped them integrate theory and practice, and improved their professional proficiency.^[8-11] In this study, approximately half of the students reported that psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice developed their communication and problem solving skills in the preparation process for the nursing profession.

The aims of intern practice are to assess healthy and diseased individuals with biopsychosocial aspects using a systematic approach, the use of basic therapeutic communication skills in care, the collaboration with other team members, and providing care appropriate to basic ethical rules along with ethical sensitivity.^[13] In this study, some students stated that psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice developed their skills in a holistic approach when relating with patients in patient-nurse interactions, contributed to the improvement of their skills with regard

to working with a care plan and performing intervention, and enabled them to use effective communication techniques.

Today, the number of studies conducted on psychiatric and mental health nursing is increasing. Studies are being conducted to improve the quality of nursing services in clinical environments. Nurses are expected to improve their practices relating to patient care and provide more quality of care. Providing such care is possible through the quality education of nurses.^[14] In this study, students stated that psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice contributed to the observation, interview, and mental state examination skills. The acquisition of these skills, which are regarded as fundamental in terms of psychiatric nursing, is necessary so that students improve the quality of care in units that they will work in after graduation. The acquisition of these skills could help students feel more professionally competent.

In this study, students stated that psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice contributed to the development of their self-esteem in terms of personal development. The course of psychiatric and mental health nursing provides opportunities for students to improve in these areas. As well as general communication subjects such as empathy and assertiveness, the communication with psychiatric patients is also included in the course content. The acquisition of this theoretical information is intended to enhance skills within the scope of intern practice. For these reasons, it is considered that this practice may have helped the improvement of students' communication skills and their personal development.

Conclusion

This study shows that psychiatric and mental health nursing intern practice can be effective on nursing students' personal and professional development. However, psychiatric nursing education in institutions provide different types of education and cannot be compared in this study. This fact was regarded as the limitation of the study. It is recommended that studies assessing the effectiveness of psychiatric and mental health nursing education should be conducted in educational institutions providing different types of education.

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