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Original research article

The use of teaching methods in communication training of nurses at universities

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ABSTRACT

From the perspective of modern nursing as a regulated profession, the quality of provided care is evaluated not only with the focus on performance but also on communication skills, which increase this quality as well as the overall saturation efficiency of patient's needs. The application of modern teaching methods in the process of acquiring communication skills is essential in the professional preparation of nurses. This contribution has a cross-sectional quantitative study design based on a questionnaire survey. The aim of this paper is to present an overview of the use of teaching methods in the communication preparation of nurses at universities in the Czech and Slovak Republics, including the results of the research carried out. Data collection was performed using an anonymous non-standardised questionnaire survey. The questionnaire items were focused on the use of teaching methods in subjects in nurse–patient communication subjects. The research group consisted of students of the first and second years of the full-time General Nurse bachelor study programme from universities and colleges in the Czech and Slovak Republics, who have completed communication lessons or related subjects. The final amount of processed and applicable questionnaires was 1267 (81.74%) of the total number of questionnaires sent. To process the data, the following statistical methods were used: data exploration analysis, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The results confirm the retreat from the concept of “traditional lessons” to lessons where discussion dominates. However, the use of alternative teaching methods, such as role-play, was referred to as occasional by the majority of respondents. By increasing the frequency of using non-traditional teaching methods, there will be a greater acquisition of communication skills and hence a better quality of nursing care overall.

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Introduction

Effective mastering of communication situations can be considered as an integral part of the healthcare worker's professional behaviour. Communication techniques (skills, interventions) and its mastering should be a natural part of all the clinical subjects, which the preparation for a nursing profession include. The term of communication is widely used in scientific disciplines that characterise it from different perspectives. In pedagogy, psychology, medicine and nursing, communication is not considered to be the mere transfer of information between the sender and the recipient. It is much more, especially about self-affirmation, self-presentation, expression of attitudes and opinions about the subject, the communiqué and the recipients information. It is a diverse level of action, influencing and facilitating understanding. As reported by McCroskey et al. [1], communication forms a bridge between a teacher who has specific knowledge and a student who has a certain learning capacity. The knowledge gained by students is mediated through communication.

Communication is an integral part of nursing care and the nursing professional's approach. To master the communication skills, we can use various means [2]. An effective and efficient communication is a skill, which can be learnt [3]. The social dimension of communication is the basic pillar of a nurse's work. Patient's perception, needs, decision making, cooperation, and education, are activities, which demonstrate the maturity of the communication skills of each healthcare worker. The contact between individuals is an interactive process, and communication is only a part and instrument of this process. But it allows for a connection between self-thinking, experiencing and behaviour that leads to the achievement of the expected results, empathy and perceptual social sensitivity, naturalness in establishing contacts and creating a wide register of social skills and techniques. The ability of a nurse to think about the stimuli, respond appropriately and properly and adequately, and use them for their own cultivated expression can be perceived as communicative competency, whose training, mastering and consolidation are an essential part of a nurse's training in higher education [4,5]. In the professional training of nurses, the Rogers approach is preferred from the beginning. This is a human focused approach introduced by American psychologist Carl Ransom Rogers. It supports the ability to accept the patient, the empathy and the authenticity of the healthcare worker. According to Jurásková [6, p. 241] "an authentic person is capable of respecting and accepting the other". Trešlová [7] is of the opinion that it is necessary to practice the non-traditional teaching methods, especially activating, role-play and teaching based on problem solving, followed by emotional analysis, which allows for an understanding of the meaning and effect of communication. Nowadays, the didactic principles are applied in a nurse's education, which greatly support the achievement of optimal results during the lessons. For the purpose of this paper, we will mention only those significantly related to the combination of theory and practice of communication preparation of nurses at the tertiary level of education. The basic principles are the principle of consciousness, the principle of succession, the principle of education

and the principle of activity [8,9]. In this context, Cirbes [10] states that such an active activity is based on a high degree of autonomy and creativity. He considers the student's internal motivation, interest in education and respect for his/her abilities, possibilities and needs as progressive elements. Last but not least, the activation of the student is an indispensable didactic moment of using his/her own experience and knowledge so far, which is offered by the modern teaching methods. The communication preparation of nurses emphasizes the application of the principle of clarity, the principle of joining theory and practice, and the principle of an individual approach to science [8,9,11]. Appropriate teaching methods, which can be used in the nurse's training, involve not only the mastering of verbal and nonverbal skills, but also the development of emotional, empathetic, receptive and listening [12]. Generally speaking, teaching methods are an integral and incompatible part of the learning process. Skalková [13, p. 118] represents the teaching method as a "method of intentional organisation of teacher's and student's activities leading to the expected goals". Teaching methods translate the target group of learners, make it easier to recognise and understand the reality in which they are placed, and thus form their attitudes, opinions and subsequent activities that are based on community needs. Maňák and Švec [14, p. 23] conclude the concept of teaching method as "a structured system of teacher's activity and student's learning activities aimed at achieving the specific educational goals". In nursing education, however, these are primarily the needs of the patients whose satisfaction is a priority and goal of the nursing process. Part of these learning activities in not only mastering of practical psychomotor skills, but also the training of communication skills such as empathy, listening, and nursing comprehension.

The aim of this research was to map out the use of monological and dialogical teaching methods and to compare the use of activating methods in the communication preparation of nurses in universities and colleges in the Czech and Slovak Republics.

Materials and methods

A cross-sectional quantitative study based on a questionnaire survey was chosen for this research. The research group consisted of students of the first and second year of the full-time General Nurse bachelor study programme from universities and colleges in the Czech and Slovak Republics, who have completed communication lessons or related subjects. The printed questionnaire was sent to 21 institutions (in the Czech Republic 12 and in the SR 9) of relevant universities and colleges, who offered the General Nurse bachelor study programme in the period under review. The number of questionnaires sent to individual institutions was 865 questionnaires within the Czech Republic, and 685 questionnaires within the Slovak Republic. The return rate was 85.42% (720 questionnaires from the Czech Republic and 604 from the Slovak Republic). During the data processing we had to carry out an initial quantitative analysis of the correctness and completeness of the completed data. The final number of the processed and usable questionnaires was 1267 (81.74%). The questionnaire items were focused on the use of teaching

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