



Research teaching in learning disability nursing: Exploring the views of student and registered learning disability nurses



Ruth Northway^{a,*}, Michelle Parker^{b,1}, Neil James^{a,2}, Lynsey Davies^{c,3}, Kaye Johnson^{d,4}, Sally Wilson^{e,5}

^a School of Care Sciences, University of South Wales, Pontypridd CF37 1DL, United Kingdom

^b 50 Manual Street, Goole, Yorkshire DN14 6TH, United Kingdom

^c Hywel Dda Health Board, 13 Trostre Road Llanelli, SA15 1LQ, United Kingdom

^d Pin-Point Health and Social Care, 3 South View Bridgehill Consett, Co Durham DH8 8QE, United Kingdom

^e George Eliot Hospital, College Street Nuneaton, CV10 7DJ, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Accepted 6 May 2015

Keywords:

Nursing education
Research
Evidence based nursing
Learning disability

SUMMARY

Background: Whilst there is a need to develop the research base within learning disability nursing it is also significant that currently there is little published data as to how research is taught to this group of nurses.

Objectives: To increase understanding of how research is currently taught to learning disability nurses within the UK.

Design: A survey design was used.

Setting: The research was undertaken at a conference held in the UK in March 2014.

Participants: 310 learning disability nurses attending the conference of which 212 completed the free text question. This comprised student nurses ($n = 158$), registered nurses working in practice settings ($n = 25$) and registered nurses working in educational institutions ($n = 24$). Five participants did not specify their background.

Methods: Participants were invited to complete a questionnaire that included a free text question regarding the teaching of research to learning disability nurses: it is the responses to this question that are reported in this paper. Responses were transcribed and thematically analysed.

Findings: Eight themes emerged: Teaching approach – the good and the bad; finding the right level; right from the start; we need more time; generic versus specialist; there's not enough; getting research into practice; and what should we focus on?

Conclusions: Variations exist in terms of the timing of research education, the teaching approaches used, and hence the quality of student experience. Of particular concern is the apparent gap between research teaching and the use of research in practice, and the reported lack of support for research within practice settings. However, enthusiasm for research is evident and hence recommendations are made both to enhance teaching and to strengthen links with practice.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

Priorities for the development of the learning disability⁶ (LD) nursing profession within the UK are set out in *Strengthening the Commitment*

* Corresponding author at: School of Care Sciences, Faculty of Life Sciences and Education, University of South Wales, Pontypridd, CF37 1DL. Tel.: +44 1443 483177.

E-mail addresses: ruth.northway@southwales.ac.uk (R. Northway), mjparker666@gmail.com (M. Parker), neil.james@southwales.ac.uk (N. James), lynsey.davies4@wales.nhs.uk (L. Davies), kjohnsonrld@gmail.com (K. Johnson), sally.wilson@geh.nhs.uk (S. Wilson).

¹ Tel.: +44 7794525044.

² Tel.: +44 1443 483089.

³ Tel.: +44 7812900069.

⁴ Tel.: +44 7447690933.

⁵ Tel.: +44 7789480943.

⁶ In this paper the term learning disability (LD) has been used as this is the current terminology used to describe nurses working with this group of people within the UK. It is recognised, however, that international readers may be more familiar with the term intellectual disability and in this paper these two terms should be viewed as interchangeable.

(Scottish Government, 2012) where two recommendations relate to the use of evidence in practice and the development of research in this field of nursing practice. Fundamental to the achievement of these recommendations is a workforce that is able to use evidence to underpin their practice and able to contribute to the production of new knowledge. However, currently little information exists regarding how research is taught to LD nurses. This paper seeks to address this deficit by reporting the findings of free text question within a wider survey concerning the use of research in LD nursing.

Background

The Code of Professional Conduct (Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC], 2015) requires all nurses to base their practice on the best available evidence hence practitioners need to have an awareness of how to access research, critically evaluate it, and apply it to practice settings. However, the available literature is inconclusive in terms of how best to teach research (Hek and Shaw, 2006).

The value of research teaching has been questioned by some nursing students (McCurry and Martins, 2010) and some find learning about research difficult leading them to view this subject less positively than other subjects within the curriculum (Thomson et al., 2014). Bonsaksen (2014) suggests that the perceived/actual divide within academia between teaching and research (with few staff engaged in research) can reinforce this view by leading students to believe that research is an activity undertaken by only a few, and hence it is not relevant to them.

How best to teach research to under-graduate nurses is an issue of international concern (Irvine et al., 2008). Healy and Jenkins (2009), speaking more broadly of undergraduate research teaching, argue that it should be mainstreamed and integrated into all of the curriculum rather than being a separate subject: this supports students to engage with the subject and values the contribution of all staff (rather than just those who are research focused). Embedding research within all of the nursing curriculum rather than just in specific 'research classes' and the use of enquiry based learning to enable students to access, appraise, and apply research to clinical settings is also recommended by Christie et al. (2012).

Relevance to practice is important for nursing students and Newton et al. (2010) argue that there needs to be support for research within practice settings if students are to be able to develop an understanding and appreciation of evidence based practice. This requires that both educational curricula and the infrastructure within practice settings are supportive of the development of research and its application to practice (Loke et al., 2014), and that a culture is developed in which using research is the norm (Balakas and Sparks, 2010).

There can be difficulties with teaching research to mixed ability groups (Balakas and Sparks, 2010) but there is consensus that the use of experiential methods is beneficial (Irvine et al., 2008). McCurry and Martins (2010) found that students preferred the use of interactive group activities that facilitated the practical application of research skills. Elsewhere the use of peer tutors (more senior students and recently qualified nurses) to support student learning regarding research has been found to be helpful (Thomson et al., 2014). Most importantly the use of peer tutors was found to make research feel more accessible to the students since it demonstrated that it was not just something understood and undertaken by academic staff.

Nursing educators have been urged to change their focus from simply providing information about research to providing opportunities for students to gain experience of the research process (Loke et al., 2014) and it has been argued that students should be moved from being consumers of knowledge to being knowledge producers (Healy and Jenkins, 2009). Birks (2011) suggests that academics should seize the opportunities available to engage students in active, engaging and meaningful ways in research but recognise that this requires specific skills.

Whilst this literature highlights issues that may be relevant to the teaching of research to LD nurses no literature was found that specifically addressed this particular context. This paper therefore aims to address this gap in knowledge.

Methods

Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study and this was piloted with 5 registered and 5 student nurses not involved in the main study: no substantive changes were made. The questionnaire comprised predominantly fixed response questions but the focus of this paper is on the free text data collected in response to the statement: 'What do you think about how research is taught to

learning disability nurses? What is good and what needs to be improved?'

Participants were given a copy of the questionnaire at conference registration and an announcement was also provided from the stage on day one. Completed questionnaires were collected via a box available at the registration desk and members of the research team were available throughout the two days of the conference.

Sample

A convenience sample of nurses attending the Positive Choices Conference in March 2014 was invited to participate in this survey. This conference is held annually primarily for student nurses from the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland undertaking courses in LD nursing: some registered nurses also attend. In total 498 people registered to attend the conference and of these 310 (62%) completed and returned the questionnaire. Two hundred and twelve (68% of participants) comprising student nurses ($n = 158$), registered nurses working in practice settings ($n = 25$) and registered nurses working in educational establishments ($n = 24$) completed the free text question that forms the basis of this paper. Five participants did not specify their background. Participants were each assigned a participant number and this is used for identification purposes in the discussion of findings.

Ethics

The questionnaire included an initial section that detailed the rationale for the study, how the data would be used, and mechanisms to ensure anonymity of responses. It was stated that return of the questionnaire would be taken as implying consent to participate in the study. The study was reviewed by the Faculty of Life Sciences and Education Ethics Committee at the University South Wales and received a favourable opinion.

Data Analysis

All responses were transcribed verbatim and reviewed by all members of the research team to identify recurring themes. Based on this initial review consensus was achieved and a coding frame was developed detailing key themes and associated descriptors. This was used by two members of the team (RN and MP) to independently code all of the data. Coding was then compared and a high level of agreement was noted with minor differences being resolved through discussion. To assist with retrieval of coding the raw data was then entered into NVivo and the agreed codes applied. Table 1 below details the 8 major themes and the number of excerpts coded to each theme.

Discussion of Findings

Teaching Approach: The Good and the Bad

Respondents highlighted the impact of teaching style, and the skills and knowledge of lecturers, on student engagement in research.

Table 1
Key themes.

Theme	Number of excerpts coded
Teaching approach: the good and the bad	52
Finding the right level	15
Right from the start	20
We need more time	35
Generic versus specialist	42
There's not enough	22
Getting research into practice	17
What should we focus on?	45

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/367932>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/367932>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)