



Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/coll



Moral courage in undergraduate nursing students: A literature review

Laurie Bickhoff, B Nursing^{a,*},
Peter M. Sinclair, B Nursing (Renal), MPhil, PhD (c)^{b,1},
Tracy Levett-Jones, RN, PhD, MEd & Work^{b,2}

^a Hunter New England Local Health District, John Hunter Hospital, Lookout Rd., New Lambton, NSW 2308, Australia

^b School of Nursing and Midwifery, The University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW 2308, Australia

Received 11 December 2014; received in revised form 29 April 2015; accepted 18 August 2015

KEYWORDS

Nursing student;
Clinical placements;
Moral courage;
Patient care;
Patient safety

Summary

Aim: The aim of this review was to explore factors which facilitate or inhibit undergraduate nursing students' willingness to demonstrate moral courage when confronted by poor patient care.

Methods: Included papers were those that met the criteria of being qualitative research that explored undergraduate nursing students' depictions of situations where moral courage was or was not demonstrated during clinical placements, with a particular focus on situations that impacted or had the potential to impact the quality of patient care.

Papers were reviewed using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme Qualitative Research Checklist. The 15 papers included in the review were then thematically analysed.

Findings: The literature reports, despite feeling a moral obligation to act, most nursing students lack the moral courage to intervene or speak up when faced with poor practice. While students may subsequently report the behaviour, at the time of the event, they often remain passive spectators and sometimes even active participants. The major themes identified in the literature were: just a student, don't rock the boat, fear of consequences, mentor–student relationship, and patient advocate identity. The literature also identified that nursing students suffer ongoing moral distress when they do not have the courage to confront poor practice.

Conclusion: There is a need for further research to explore positive examples of how nursing students demonstrate moral courage when undertaking clinical placements. These narratives

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61 411 987 081.

E-mail addresses: Laurie@DefiningNursing.com (L. Bickhoff), Peter.Sinclair@newcastle.edu.au (P.M. Sinclair), Tracy-Levett-Jones@newcastle.edu.au (T. Levett-Jones).

¹ Tel.: +61 02 4921 7436; fax: +61 02 4921 6301.

² Tel.: +61 02 4921 6559; fax: +61 02 4921 6301.

have the potential to influence future students' attitudes, values and behaviours by providing stimulus materials for teaching.

© 2015 Australian College of Nursing Ltd. Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Contents

- 1. Introduction 00
- 2. Background 00
 - 2.1. Moral courage 00
 - 2.2. Clinical placements 00
 - 2.3. Poor practice 00
- 3. Aim 00
- 4. Search strategy 00
- 5. Findings 00
 - 5.1. Just a student 00
 - 5.2. Don't rock the boat 00
 - 5.3. Fear of consequences 00
 - 5.4. Mentor–student relationships 00
 - 5.5. Patient advocate identity 00
 - 5.6. Lack of confidence/knowledge 00
 - 5.7. Previous responses 00
 - 5.8. Indirect challenging 00
 - 5.9. On-going moral distress 00
- 6. Discussion 00
- 7. Conclusion 00
- 8. Implications for future research 00
- Funding 00
- Appendix 1. Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Qualitative Research Checklist 00
- References 00

1. Introduction

Clinical placements play an integral role in preparing undergraduate nursing students for workforce readiness. However, during these placements, students report that they frequently witness or are asked to condone poor practice (Rees, Monrouxe, & McDonald, 2014). When confronted with clinical situations that may negatively impact the quality of patient care, research suggests that students often remain silent, lacking the moral courage to intervene (Gunther, 2011). Consequently this literature review explored the extant literature on nursing students' clinical placement experiences to identify factors which facilitated or inhibited their capacity to demonstrate moral courage.

2. Background

2.1. Moral courage

Contemporary scholars define moral courage as the ability to rise above fear and take action based on one's ethical beliefs (Day, 2007; Lachman, 2009). Moral courage is the readiness to stand up and do the right thing, even if this means standing alone (Murray, 2010). Moral courage bridges the gap between knowing one's personal values and professional obligations, and acting on them despite risks such as social ostracising, embarrassment or loss of employment (Clancy, 2003; Lachman, 2007). For morally courageous

individuals, upholding their core values is judged worth exposing themselves to harm or vulnerability (Lachman, 2010).

Moral courage is considered a crucial virtue for nurses (Kidder, 2005; Purtilo, 2000). Morally courageous nurses are unwavering in their commitment to honouring and respecting patients and self (Sekera & Bagozzi, 2007). When pressured to conform to unethical or outdated practices, nurses require the moral courage to overcome their fears, endure the consequences and act in a manner consistent with their professional values (Clancy, 2003; Miller, 2005). Murray (2010) states "demonstrating moral courage when confronted with ethical misconduct is critical to good professional practice whether in a clinical setting, the classroom, a research laboratory, or the boardroom" (p. 4).

2.2. Clinical placements

Clinical placements are a vital component of nursing programmes, providing students with the opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge into practice (O'Mara, McDonald, Gillespie, Brown, & Miles, 2014). Clinical placements are designed to assist in building students' confidence, knowledge and professional identity, as well as the consolidation and/or development of clinical skills (Gunther, 2011). However, placements have also been identified as an ongoing source of stress and anxiety for students (Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook, & Irvine, 2007; Monrouxe, Rees, Endacott,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/5567652>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/5567652>

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