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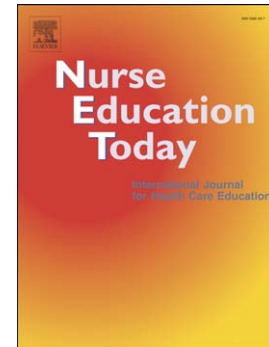
Clinical Education In psychiatric mental health nursing: Overcoming current challenges

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Abstract

Background: In response to current challenges in psychiatric mental health nursing education, nursing schools have implemented new strategies in teaching undergraduate nursing students.

Objectives: The objectives of the study were to evaluate learning outcomes of a mental health nursing clinical practicum and to explore students' perceptions of the clinical practicum.

Design: This was a mixed-method study. Sixty-three undergraduate nursing students, who were undertaking their first mental health clinical practicum, completed a set of structured questionnaires and answered open-ended questions about the clinical practicum.

Methods: Answers to open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively, and learning outcomes (i.e., empathy, mental illness prejudice, simulation-related efficacy, and satisfaction) were measured at three time points: pre-clinical, post-simulation, and post-clinical.

Results: Students reported improvement in empathy and simulation-related self-efficacy after the clinical practicum, but no change was found in mental illness prejudice. Students' expectations for and evaluation of the clinical practicum are summarized.

Conclusions: The observed improvement in learning outcomes of the clinical practicum may be attributed to the unique contribution of each component of the clinical practicum and the synergic effect of these diverse components. To manage emerging challenges in clinical settings and nursing education, it is critical to develop systematic and comprehensive mental health nursing clinical practicums for undergraduate nursing students.

Keywords: mental health nursing clinical practicum, empathy, mental illness prejudice, simulation

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