



Attitudes toward and willingness to work with older people among undergraduate nursing students in a public university in Sri Lanka: A cross sectional study



Sarath Rathnayake ^{a,*}, Yamuna Athukorala ^{a,1}, Sidiyah Siop ^{b,2}

^a Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

^b Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak, Malaysia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Accepted 9 October 2015

Keywords:

Attitudes
Work preference
Older people
Nursing students
Sri Lanka

SUMMARY

Background: With the increased number of older people globally, caring for older people has become a challenge for many countries. Nurses have a pivotal role in providing quality care for older people and care is affected by their attitudes. The preparation of nurses to deliver quality care needs to be instilled during their studying in the Schools of Nursing.

Objective: To examine the attitudes of nursing students toward and their willingness to work with older people in Sri Lanka.

Methodology: A purposive sample of 98 first to fourth year undergraduate nursing students in the Department of Nursing, University of Peradeniya completed a self-administered questionnaire consisting of socio-demographic variables, Kogan's Attitudes toward Older People Scale, and questions related to willingness to work with older people.

Results: Fifty percent of the respondents ($n = 49$) held slightly positive attitudes toward older people while 45% ($n = 44$) held slightly negative attitudes. About one-third of the respondents (29.9%, $n = 29$) selected the elderly group as the least preferred group for their future career from the categorized seven age groups. Only 5.1% ($n = 5$) of the respondents ranked the elderly group as the first preferred group. There was a significant difference in attitudes between students who lived with older people and students who did not live with older people ($t = 2.565$, $p = .012$). There was a positive relationship between attitudes and preference for working with older people ($r = .342$, $p = .001$).

Conclusion: Nursing students have moderately positive attitudes toward older people; however, they show little interest in working with older people. Living with older people develops positive attitudes of young people toward older people. Attitudes are related to the selection in area of specialty in nursing. Nursing curricula need to include Gerontological Nursing as a major area.

© 2015 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

The increasing number of elderly persons is a global phenomenon and Sri Lanka, a developing country located in the South Asian region is also experiencing this rapid demographic change. In 2012, the elderly population of Sri Lanka, aged 60 and over, was reported as 2.52 million representing 12.4% of the total population (Department of Census and Statistics, 2012). With this increased number of older people, the health sector of Sri Lanka faces a serious challenge in meeting their health

needs. As nurses are key people in caring, they have challenging roles in meeting the nursing needs of older people.

Aging is associated with health problems such as increasing diseases and functional disabilities (Browning and Thomas, 2013; Henderson et al, 2008; Liu et al, 2012). Most of the age-related problems are chronic, that require long term management. This phenomenon increases greater demand on nursing care. National studies showed that the prevalence of chronic diseases and functional disabilities were high among older people (Malhotra et al, 2010; Nanayakkara, 2009; Rathnayake and Siop, 2015; Weerasuriya and Jayasinghe, 2005) and non-communicable diseases were the leading cause of hospital deaths in the country (Ministry of Health, 2012). According to Rannan-Eliya (2007), aging is a significant cost driver in national health expenditure in Sri Lanka. According to his projection, expenditure for non-communicable diseases will continue to increase for cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes mellitus specifically.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +94 812388820; fax: +94 812387394.

E-mail addresses: sarathr@pdn.ac.lk (S. Rathnayake), yamunarathukorala@gmail.com (Y. Athukorala), jsidiyah@fmhs.unimas.my (S. Siop).

¹ Tel.: +94 812388820; fax: +94 812387394.

² Tel.: +60 82 581000x5511; fax: +60 82 665152.

Therefore, this challenge needs to be addressed in social and health policies.

Background

The quality of care provided by healthcare professionals is influenced by their attitudes (Courtney et al, 2000; Liu et al, 2012; Bleijenberg et al, 2012; Hanson, 2014; Lambrinou et al, 2009). Nurses are the key people in the health sector with a foundational value of caring and who are well positioned in delivering quality care. Their negative attitudes toward older people negatively affect the care they provided to older people (Hanson, 2014; Cozort, 2008). Previous studies reported that nursing students portrayed negative attitudes toward older people (Celik et al, 2010; Bleijenberg et al, 2012; Soderhamn et al, 2001). Furthermore, Geriatric Nursing is not a popular branch in nursing (Soderhamn et al, 2001). Numerous studies showed that nursing students had little interest in working with older people (Bleijenberg et al, 2012; Henderson et al, 2008; King et al, 2013). Moreover, studies reported that although nursing students had positive attitudes, they had lack of interest in working with older people after their graduation (Henderson et al, 2008; King et al, 2013).

Nursing education has a significant role in cultivating positive attitudes toward older people. According to King et al. (2013), nursing education institutions have an important role in changing attitudes of the nursing students toward older people and influencing their work preferences. The previous studies found that education and the academic year of the students had a significant impact on attitudes among nursing students toward older people (Bleijenberg et al, 2012; Deltsidou et al, 2010). In addition, studies showed that gender and the previous experience of caring of older people were factors associated with attitudes toward older people among nursing students (Deltsidou et al, 2010; Henderson et al, 2008; Hweidi and Al-Obeisat, 2006; Lambrinou et al, 2009; Soderhamn et al, 2001).

Bleijenberg et al. (2012) stated that with current demographic changes, nearly all nursing students have to work with older people after their graduation, regardless of their choice to do so or not. Consequently, the development of positive attitudes among nursing students is crucial in providing quality care to older people as geriatric care is emerging as an essential component in the health sector. Therefore, an assessment of nursing students' attitudes toward older people and their willingness to work with older people is very important in view of the current demographic changes that Sri Lanka is experiencing. In the Sri Lankan health context, Geriatric and Gerontology is not a well-developed specialty. There is no well-established geriatric care service in the hospital or community level, and the health system in Sri Lanka has no geriatricians or other related health professionals (Perera, 2011; Rajapakse et al, 2012). Moreover, the elderly patients are treated in the same wards together with the younger and adult patients.

Presently, 16 Government Schools of Nursing under the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka provide a 3-year diploma in nursing education as a pre-requisites program for nursing registration. The majority of the registered nurses who were recruited for nursing practice were graduates from these government-run schools. All Government-run Nursing Schools implement the same curriculum. This curriculum does not include Gerontological Nursing as a major subject area. The seven public universities namely Sri Jayewardenepura, Peradeniya, Ruhuna, Jaffna, Eastern University, Open University and Kothalawala Defence University offer the 4-year undergraduate degree programs for nurses. However, only a small number of student nurses are enrolled in those programs. Different curricula are implemented by the nursing units in national universities. However, there is also not much emphasis for Gerontological Nursing education in those curricula. In addition, there are no post graduate nursing education opportunities in Gerontological Nursing in the country. With the current trends in demography, geriatric education and service are essential and need to be prioritized in the education and service sectors in the country. This situation implies the need of the

development of a long-term framework in the health sector to address the healthcare issues of older people. Hence, an assessment of the related areas is essential. In the Sri Lankan context, there are no reported studies that investigate attitudes of nursing students toward older people and their willingness to work with older people. Therefore, the findings of this study could be used in nursing education and development of curriculum.

Aims

This study aims to examine the attitudes of undergraduate nursing students toward older people and their willingness to work with older people in Sri Lanka. This study further examines the differences of attitudes by gender, ethnicity, religion, students' academic year and if they live with older people or not. This study also sought to determine the possible relationship between attitudes and willingness to work with older people.

Methods

Study Design, Setting and Sample

This was a cross-sectional study conducted among undergraduate nursing students in the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. The total number of students in the Department of Nursing is 133. Due to the small number of the students, all nursing students from the first to fourth year enrolled in the undergraduate degree program were included. The students who refused to participate in the study were excluded. Four nursing students from each batch who participated in the pre-test of the questionnaire were excluded in the main study. One hundred and three nursing students filled and returned the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 89.7%.

Instruments

The data collection instrument was a self-administered questionnaire designed with three sections namely (1) socio-demographic data (2) the Kogan's Attitudes toward Older People Scale (KAOP) (Kogan, 1961) and (3) questions related to willingness to work with older people. The socio-demographic questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic variables namely age, gender, ethnicity, religion, academic year of student and living with older people at home.

KAOP was used to examine attitudes toward older people among the nursing students (Kogan, 1961). This Likert type scale facilitates the study of attitudes toward older people with respect to both norms and individual differences (Kogan, 1961). This instrument has been widely used to examine attitudes toward older people among health professionals (Bleijenberg et al, 2012; Alsenany, 2007; Lambrinou et al, 2009; Soderhamn et al, 2001). The KAOP consists of 34 statements about older persons: 17 negative and 17 positive statements. For this study, students were asked to respond on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree to strongly agree". Negative items were reverse coded in the analysis so that a higher score indicates more positive attitudes. The minimum score is 34, the maximum score is 238, and the neutral middle score is 119. The KAOP has been found to be a reliable and valid tool for measuring attitudes toward older people (Kogan, 1961). Kogan (1961) reported Spearman–Brown reliability coefficients ranging from 0.66 to 0.83, and inter-scale item correlations ranging from 0.46 to 0.52. Cronbach's alpha reliability of this scale and its translated versions in studies conducted by Doherty et al. (2011), Soderhamn et al. (2001) and Yen et al. (2009) were 0.751, 0.80, and 0.82 respectively.

Nursing students' willingness to work with older people as a career choice was assessed by ranking the student's preference for working with different age groups including older people. Age categories

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6847790>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6847790>

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