Assessment of Knowledge and Attitude on Leadership among nursing students

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Health care is facing dramatic changes. An aging population, growing diversity, the global health care system, bio-medical advances and new areas of knowledge will reshape how we provide care in the future. To address these changes nurses will require more knowledge and leadership skills than ever before (Bednash, 2008). Developing future nurse leaders is one of the greatest challenges faced by the nursing profession. Powerful leadership skills are needed by all nurses, those providing direct care and those in top management positions (Mahoney, 2001). Leadership is not merely a series of skills or tasks; rather it is an attitude that forms behaviour (Cook, 2001).

Nurse leaders should have the ability to respond capably to health care challenges but they lack in vision and ability to shape a change in environment (Fagin, 2000). A leader engages people in making decisions and helps make sure everyone works well together at all levels (Syque, 2006). Encouraging students to participate in leadership may solve problems in delivering health care (Mersey & Blanchard, 1999). Therefore students need to sustain positive changes in order to demonstrate leadership.

Objectives

The study sought to assess the knowledge about the leadership among nursing students in the health care delivery, and explore the attitudes regarding leadership in the health care delivery among nurse students of PSG College of Nursing, Coimbatore.

Methodology and Procedures

A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. Descriptive survey studies usually entail the precise measurement of phenomena as they currently exist within a single group.

All 38 final year students who were in the internship period delivering health care at the PSG hospital constituted the study population.

Tool for data collection: Tool consisted of 4 sections:

Section I : Demographic data: it includes the base line information about the students.

Section II : Structured questionnaire on knowledge regarding leadership among nursing students in health care delivery which consists of 27 items.

Section III : A Scale on attitude regarding leadership among nursing students in health care delivery which contains 25 statements.

Section IV : Questionnaire on self-evaluation of leadership skills with 10 items.

Review of literature

The ongoing nature of leadership development and a market place that requires strong clinical competence call for programmes that enhance leadership designated and implemented by baccalaureate and associate degree faculty and administrators at a local community hospital. Ten new graduate employed full time, were mentors by nurse managers and thought leadership and clinical skills by nursing faculty during one year programme (Desimone, Barbara, 1999)

Effect of Mentors on leadership: The literature suggests that mentoring is an important factor in the development of nurse leaders. Preliminary evidences suggest that self-efficacy may provide the conceptual link between receipt of mentoring functions and leadership performance. This study reinforces the need for further exploration of this relationship to inform and guide developmental interventions and allocations of resource. (Blastorah, Margret 2009)

Educating Nurses for Leadership: The need for effective leadership is critical. "Nothing is important perhaps than preparing future leaders. They are our hope- hope of our profession, hope for health care, and hope for our Nation". All nurses are leaders. Nurses lead patients, families, groups, communities, committees and organisations - all highly challenging and demanding in our complex health care environment (Feldman, 2005).

Student leadership challenge: The student leadership challenge is about how student leaders mobilise others to get extra ordinary things done in organisations. It's about the practices they tell us to transform values

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into actions, visions into reality, obstacles into innovations. It helps to create the climate in which challenges as opportunities are transformed into remarkable success (Kouzes, 2008).

Ethical Issues for nurse leaders: A survey of nurse executives found certain ethical issues presented significantly greater problems for nurse leaders than they did for vice presidents of health organisations (Cooper et al, 2002).

Benchmarking in nursing: It includes measuring operational and clinical practices that lead to best outcomes; it includes understand current performance levels, reduce cost, rally the organisation, offer quality services. Team members get most value out of it by understanding day-to-day operations (Czarnecki, 1995).

Leadership challenge: A survey of 34 nurse executives and 78 nurse managers conducted at the annual Minnesota Organisation of Leaders in nursing conference, three quarters of nurse managers reported that they had no succession plan. Succession planning includes leadership development programs, mentoring, performance assessment, and over all work force planning. Disruption in leadership continuity can have unfortunate consequences, including reduced confidence from the community and the employees and a negative impact on image and financing (Denning et al, 2006).

Leadership in designing safer work settings: A national survey of registered nurses sponsored by Nurse Week and the American organisation of the Nurse Executives found that 28 percent of the nurses who responded had experienced episodes of violence in the workplace with in the past year. This study arises a need for violence prevention programme in order to build up leadership (Hemmila, 2003).

Findings and Discussion

The age of the student was 20, 21, 22, 23 years. Among 38 students (2.63%) of the student was in 20 years, 30 (78.94%) of the student were in 21 years 6 (15.78%) of the student were in 22 years and 1 (2.63%) of the student were in 23 years (Fig 1).

The students were posted in different clinical areas; among 38 students, 6 (15.78%) were posted in medical ward, 4 (10.52%) were posted in surgery ward, 6 (15.78%) were posted in operation theatre, 6 (15.78%) were posted in obstetrical and gynaecology ward, 5 (13.75%) were posted in Intensive care unit, 6 (15.78%) were posted in paediatric ward, 5 (13.15%) were posted in community.

Assessment of knowledge on leadership among nursing students : Among 38 students, all had moderately adequate knowledge on leadership (Fig 2a & 2b). In leadership 12 students had inadequate, 22 students had moderate, 4 had adequate knowledge. In critical thinking 14 students had inadequate, 24 had moderate and no one had adequate. In problem solving 13 students had inadequate, 22 had moderate, 3 had adequate; in communication 5 students had, Inadequate 26 students had moderate, 7 had adequate knowledge. In time management 9 had inadequate, 18 had moderate, 11 had adequate knowledge. In Role conflict and transition, 15 had inadequate, 23 had moderate and no one had adequate knowledge. In Stress, 19 had inadequate, 16 had moderate and 3 had adequate knowledge. In motivation, 6 had inadequate and no one had moderate, 32 had adequate knowledge. In ethics 9 had inadequate knowledge level, 20 had moderate and 9 had adequate knowledge level.

Assessment of attitude towards their leadership among nursing students:

Among 38 students, 27 (71.05) students' attitude was favourable and 11 (28.94) students attitude fell under yet to improve.

In leadership no students had unfavourable, 17 students had to improve, 21 had favourable atti-

Fig 1: Demographic data of the nursing students

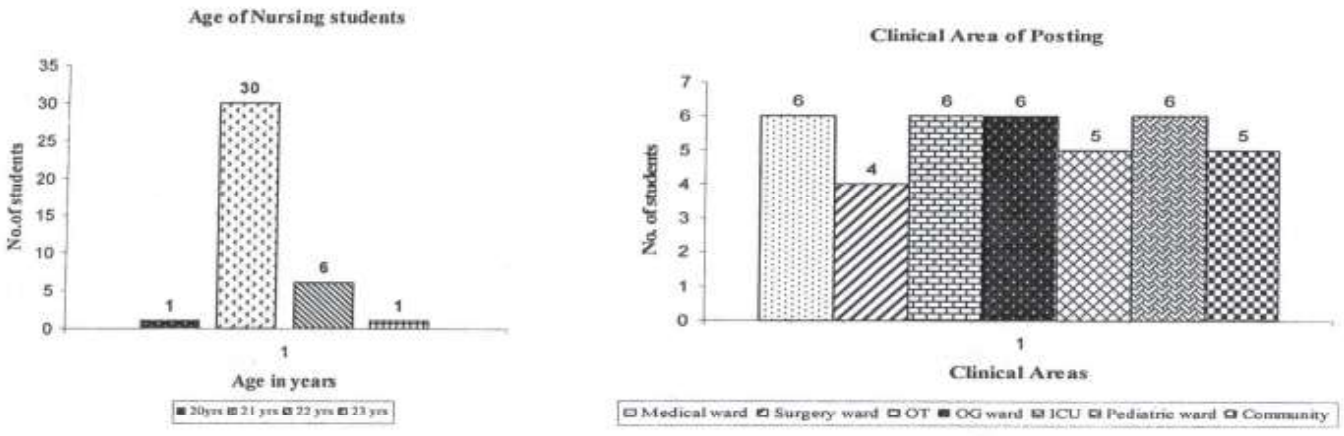


Fig 2a: Assessment of knowledge on leadership among nursing students:

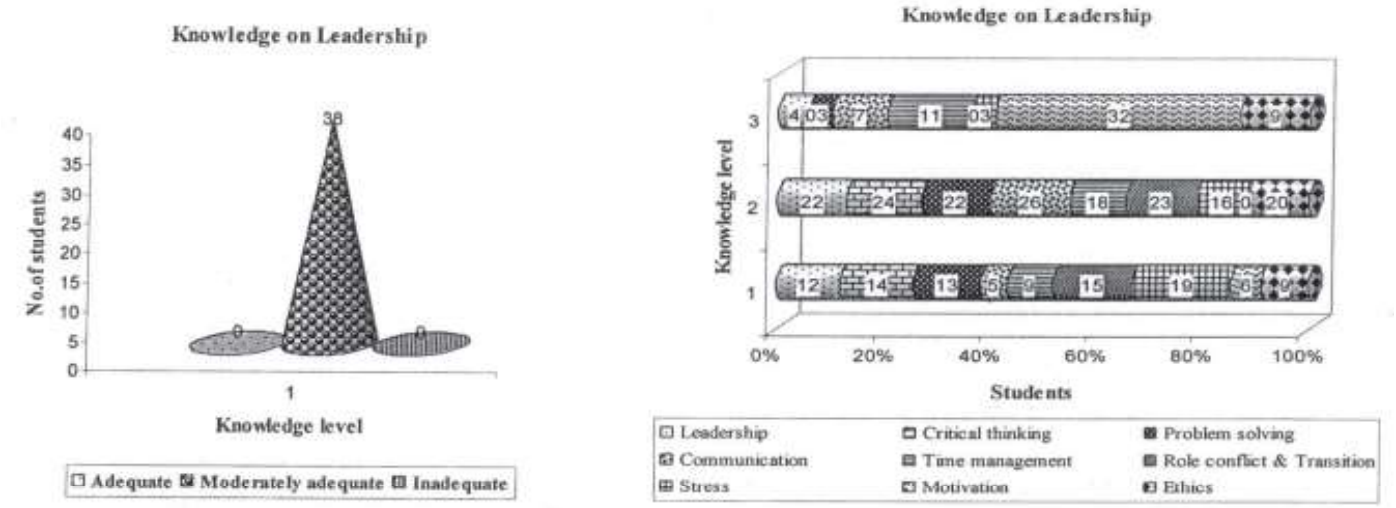
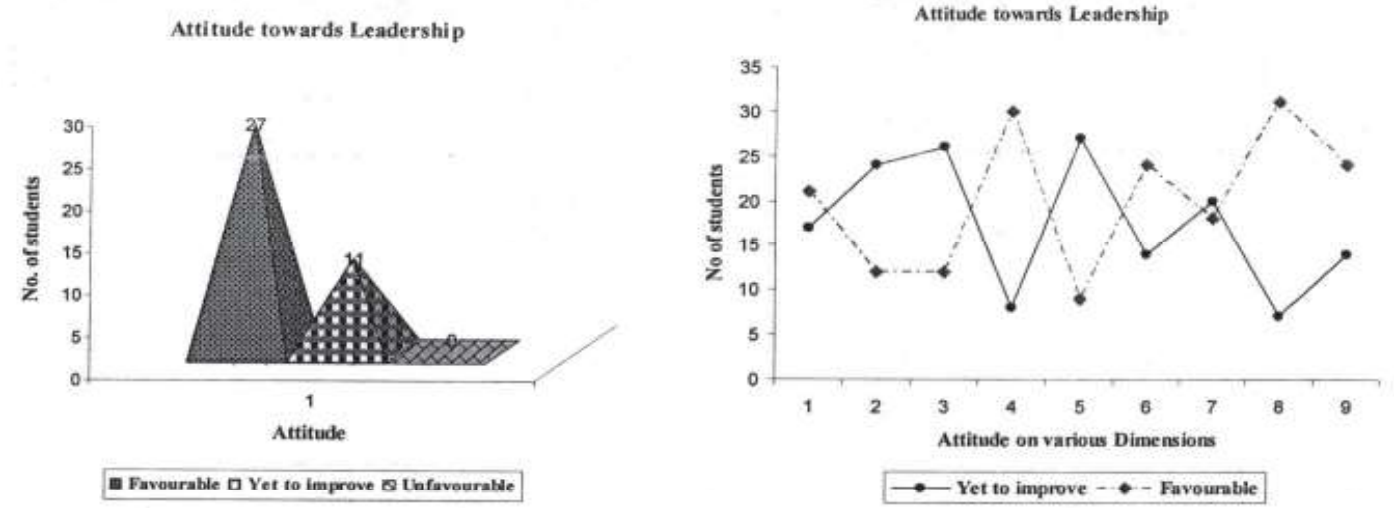


Fig 2b: Assessment of attitude towards their leadership among nursing students



tude. In critical thinking 2 students had unfavourable, 24 had to improve and 12 had favourable attitude; in problem solving 26 students had to improve, 12 had favourable attitude. In communication, 8 students had to improve, 30 students had favourable attitude. In time management, 2 had unfavourable, 27 had to improve, 9 had favourable attitude. In Role conflict and transition 14 had to improve, 24 had favourable attitude. In Stress management 7 had to improve, 31 had favorable attitude. In motivation 7 had to improve, 24 had favorable attitude. In ethics 14 had to improve, 24 had favourable attitude.

Assessment of self-evaluation on leadership among nursing students: Among 38 students 35 (92.10%) of the students had appreciable evaluation and 3 (7.89%) had non-appreciable.

Recommendations

Similar study can be conducted (i) for staff nurses and supervisors posted in various areas, (ii) to explore the methods to improve leadership quality among nursing students. Leadership training programmes can be organised for nursing students.

Conclusion

The study shows that the students have yet to develop both the knowledge and attitude on leadership to address the challenges in the emerging health care system.

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