

Patients' Preference on the Gender of the Nurses for Their Nursing Care

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According to the Canadian Nursing Association's code of ethics (2008), nurses must respect the dignity of the patients. During the nursing process, the nurses are constantly dealing with patients' rights and freedom (Snow & Austin, 2009). Nurses have to respect the patients' preferences and their choices to maintain their dignity, right and freedom. Author such as Miller (2001) also supports that the patients' have a right to choose the health care provider for their nursing and medical care. On the other hand, nursing profession is still dominated by female population that is promoting the stereotype associated with the gender of the nurses (Prideaux, 2010).

This study will analyze the patients' preferences over the gender of nurses for their daily nursing care. There are many similar researches for the intimate care. Therefore, in this study the nursing care does not include any intimate care which requires physical touch such as perineal

care and physical assessment. In this study, the daily nursing care only includes non-intimate care such as general communication for health history, admission and discharge process, administrative care and during the process of further referrals to the male or female health care providers. This study will only focus on younger and older female patients. According to the Youth and the United Nations (2010), "youth" refers the persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. According to the Government of Canada (2010), "senior" refers the person older than the age of 55. Therefore, in this study the "youth" or "younger" refers the patients between the age of 15 and 24 years and "senior" or "older" refers the patients older than 55.

In this paper, the research proposal will be discussed with the research problem and its importance in the nursing management fields. Two literatures will be reviewed and the gaps

will be explained. Detail research approaches, design, and its' weakness and strengths will be discussed. Later in this paper, the independent and dependent variables, target and assessable population and sampling procedures will be explained, followed by feasibility of the study and conclusions.

Problem and Problem Statement

Respecting patients' wishes is one of the critical elements of trusts (Belcher & Jones, 2009). The trust helps the nurses to create the therapeutic relationship which eventually improves the quality of interventions and the prognosis of the patients' illness (Belcher & Jones). Therefore, therapeutic and trusting relationship between patients and nurses are key factors for the better prognosis of the patients' illness. Nurses can establish the trusting relationship by acknowledging and respecting the patients' preferences (Belcher & Jones). New studies that can identify the preferences of the younger and the older female patients over the gender of the

nurses for their non-intimate nursing care need to be identified.

Significance of the Problem

Unit manager's responsibility includes the assignment of the nurses for their patients in the unit. When unit manager is not aware of the patients' preferences over the nurses' gender, it may hinder the establishment of trusting relationship between the nurses' and the patients. Thus, this study will find out the patients' preferences and help nursing management to assign the nurses accordingly.

It is also true that almost all sexual assaults are committed by male nurse and it has been stigmatizing the male nurses (Tammelleo, 2004). Similarly, in 1995 the Appellate Court of Illinois ruled that health care institution cannot assign male nurses for a female patient against her wishes ("Male nurse cares," 1995). This decision supports that patients have a right to select the healthcare provider. As it is mentioned, there are several studies confirming the patients' preferences for

their intimate care that involves physical touch. On the other hand, it is also important to understand how the younger and older female patients consider male nurses for their daily non-intimate nursing care. This study will help unit manager to make appropriate referral to the male or female physicians or therapists. After solving the problem, this study will also help the unit manager to assign the nurses accordingly so that the communication between the patients and the nurses becomes more effective and the nursing process becomes more efficient.

Search Terms

The search terms for this proposal include patients' preference for nursing care, assigning the nurses, nurses' gender, and male versus female nurses.

Literature Review

A quantitative study conducted by Chur-Hansen (2002) found out that the patients prefer the nurse of their own gender when the nursing care is more intimate in nature. This study concluded

that in intimate situation both male and female patients prefer the nurses of their own gender. Similar study, conducted by Ahmad & Alasad (2007), found out that a huge number of female patients preferred female nurses. This study concluded that female patients do not prefer male nurse during the nursing care that involves physical closeness to the patient.

Gaps in the Literature Related to the Problem

Both of these two literatures, reviewed in this proposal, do not mention about the patients' preferences for overall daily nursing care other than intimate care. These studies do not focus all other nursing care such as general communication between patients and nurses, explaining health history, signing consents, admission and discharge process, referrals process and other daily administrative care. These researches mainly conducted their studies to compare preferences of female versus male patients over female versus male nurses for their intimate care only.

Therefore, the reasons and the situation for the patients' preferences for these overall nursing cares are not addressed. Nurses and the unit manager need to know patients' preferences over the nurses' gender for all kinds of nursing care during the shift in order to provide appropriate nursing care to the patients. These literatures are limited to the intimate care only.

Research Question

Are there significant differences of the preferences made by younger female and older female patients for the gender of the nurses during the non-intimate nursing care? Is it important for a unit manager to understand the nature of the preferences of the patients to assign different nurses for different patients for different types of non-intimate nursing care?

Research Approach and Design

This study will use the non-experimental quantitative research. There will be two types of groups to be compared. First group will include

younger female patients and second groups will include older female patients. All the patients in this study will be able to do their own intimate care by themselves such as AM care, bed bath and perineal care, and physically and mentally capable of making their own decision. This study will be conducted in a cross-sectional timeframe. One patient will be asked only one time during the hospitalization process. This study will begin with the independent variables to examine its effect on the dependent variables. This study will be conducted in the University of Alberta Hospital in the city of Edmonton. This hospital should have at least five different surgical units. Each of these five units should have at least 75 younger female patients and 75 older female patients. Each of these five units should also have at least 20 male nurses and 20 female nurses available for the day shift. All male nurses, female nurses and the units will be randomly selected. During the non-intimate care such as admission process, discharge

process, consent making process and the referral process, each participated female patient will be provided a list of nurses providing the services. The list will include five randomly selected female nurses and five randomly selected male nurses. The list will mention first name, last name and the gender of these five male and five female nurses. Each patient's selection will be noted and counted. All these data will be collected in real-world setting within the selected unit.

Strengths and Weakness of the Approach and Design:

This will be the quantitative research. It will help the researcher to understand the numeric value of the preferences made by younger and older female patients over the male versus female nurses. However, this research will not tell the reason behind the preferences made by the patients. This study will not explain the influences of the patients' religious or personal values for their preferences. This study will still

provide helpful guideline for a nurse-in-charge or the unit manager to assign the nurses to the patient during the non-intimate care. This study will also help patients to be more open to their issues and concerns to the nurses. This study is non-experimental, therefore, the results are biasless and easy to conduct in the urban hospital settings. In this study there will be a possibility of Hawthorne effect because all the nurses and the patients will be explained about the study. Both of these groups can alter their preferences to produce false result. This will be a correlation study which may create interpretive problems. In this study manipulation of the independent variables will create an unethical situation; therefore, this study will depend on observations.

Research Hypothesis:

Younger female patients select female nurses even for their non-intimate care and older female patients do not show any preferences over the gender of the nurses during their non-intimate care.

Independent and Dependent Variables:

This study will investigate the characteristics of the variables. In this study the independent variable is the age of the participated patients and the dependent variable is the preferences over the gender of the nurses to provide non-intimate nursing care.

Target and Accessible Population:

In this study, the target population is all younger and older female patients admitted in the University of Alberta (UofA) Hospital in Edmonton. In this study, the accessible populations is all pre-admission or post-admission 15 to 24 years or 65 or older female patients and able to perform their own intimate care that requires physical touch.

Sampling and Recruitment Procedure:

In this study simple random sampling procedure will be used. Two lists will be created. First list includes all younger female patients of age between 15 to 24 years and the second list will include all older female patients of the age older than 55 years. Once these two

lists are created, a total of 50 patients from each of these two lists will be randomly selected. This sampling procedure will provide equal opportunity for all the samples. All younger and older female patients will have an equal opportunity to be selected. Simple random sampling procedures will also be appropriate and feasible to select total of 100 samples from the selected unit of this hospital. All participating patients will be physically or mentally able to make their own decision.

Once the patients are randomly selected the unit manager will approach the patient and ask her prefer gender for her non-intimate nursing care. Then the unit manager will note the patients' preferences. Finally, all data from younger female patients and older female patients are collected and counted. The data will show the number of male or female nurses selected by the younger and older female patients.

Researchability and Feasibility

This research will address the problem related to the assignment of male or female nurses for the younger or older female patients in the unit. Therefore, researcher will collect the professional experiences from the unit manager and experienced nurses to understand the possible research problem. Beside, this research will require supplies such as forms, template, staffs and their valuable time. This research will also require an approval of the hospital management. If these resources are available, it is feasible for an interested and dedicated researcher. This study will require operational and conceptual definition of the term such as "younger", "older", "intimate care" and "non-intimate care". Therefore, novice researcher may face several challenges. Novice researcher may also need a help from experienced research to conduct this research, especially to statically analyse the numeric data collected in this study.

Another complication of this study is to differentiate the nursing care into two different groups such as intimate-care that requires physical touch and non-intimate-care that does not require any physical touch such as administrative type of care. Defining and differentiating of these operational terms will be challenging for a novice researcher.

Lessons Learned

There are many things I have learned in this assignment. During the preparation of this proposal, I have learned the importance of the research for an evidence based practice. I have also learned how the samples are collected and analyzed and how the research proposals are made. I learned the challenges and the limitation of the research to be accurately applied in the nursing field. I have learned how the nursing research answers the question that helps us to guide our nursing care for our patients. Mainly, I have learned the importance of a good research proposal

to conduct a good research that is applicable in the real-world nursing care.

Conclusion

In this paper I discussed the importance of maintaining the patients' dignity and preferences for their nursing care. I have proposed a study to find out the preferences of younger and older female patients over the gender of nurses for their daily non-intimate care. I also discussed the problem and the importance of this study. I have discussed the summary of two literatures, including the gaps in the literature and search term for this study. The research question, design, strength and weakness are also

discussed. This quantitative study will help a unit charge nurse or nursing manager to appropriately assign the nurses for their patients in the unit. The study will be conducted in the University of Alberta Hospital. All together fifty randomly selected younger and fifty older female patients will be asked for their preferences over the gender of the nurses for their non-intimate nursing care. Despite the financial and procurement challenges, based on the number of sample population, this study is feasible for any experienced researcher.

References

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