B1-31: Shifting Paradigms: The Development of Nursing Identity in Foreign-educated Physicians Retrained as Nurses Practicing in the United States

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Abstract:
Introduction: A unique breed of nurses for the US market is emerging—the MD-Nurses. They are foreign-educated physicians who have retrained as nurses. This study was designed to answer the question "What is the basic social psychological process (BSPP) that influenced development of nursing identity in MD-Nurses practicing in the US?" The purpose was to develop a theory explaining the BSPP. Specific aims were to identify barriers which participants found as problematic and catalysts that helped them address a central problem. This study was significant because in the face of the US nursing shortage, MD-Nurses are evolving vital components of nursing. No research has been conducted about their nursing identity development. This research filled this gap.

Method(s): Grounded theory was used. Twelve MD-Nurses of various ethnicities recruited through purposive, snowball, and theoretical sampling were interviewed using 10-interview guiding questions. Interviews were taped-recorded then transcribed verbatim and imported to ATLAS.ti. Iterative constant comparative method was used for data analysis. Concept formation, development, modification, and integration were accomplished through open, axial, and theoretical coding. Core categories were discovered and a central social psychological problem and BSPP emerged. Further theorizing allowed for the discovery of a substantive theory and the beginnings of a formal theory that explained the development of nursing identity in MD-Nurses.

Results: A 3-dimensional central problem, experiencing the burdens of a new beginning, and a 5-stage substantive theory, combining the best of two worlds emerged. Dimensions of the central problem are (a) crossing cultures, (b) starting from zero, and (c) crossing professions. Stages of the
substantive theory are (a) letting go of professional identity as physician, (b) experiencing growing pains, (c) seeing nursing as a saving grace, (d) gaining authority to practice as a nurse, and (e) transitioning successfully to US nursing practice.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Findings serve as springboard toward a 5-stage formal “Theory of Transprofessionalism”. The five stages synchronize with the stages of combining the best of two worlds: (a) disengagement, (b) discouragement, (c) enlightenment, (d) encouragement, and (d) engagement.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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