PII-13: Nursing Students' Perceptions of Peer Caring: RN-BSN versus Generic BSN Students

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Abstract:
Introduction: Caring is a concept long associated with nursing and most scholars insist the profession cannot exist without it. However, it is becoming problematic for nurses to incorporate caring in practice. As such, it is important that BSN nursing students be immersed in a caring environment and caring curriculum. It is through this environment that students learn caring practices from faculty/peers. These caring practices can then be taken into practice. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the perceptions of peer caring of BSN nursing students immersed in a caring curriculum. It was hypothesized that a caring curriculum and participation in peer caring groups would foster development of peer caring behaviors. The perceptions of peer caring of generic BSN students who participated in peer caring groups were compared to the perceptions of RN-BSN students who did not participate in peer caring groups.
**Method(s):** The study utilized a non-experimental, comparative design (N=139). The Peer Group Interaction Scale (PGCIS) was used to measure perceptions of peer caring. Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring was the conceptual framework used. Limitations include the small sample size and the use of a single measurement.

**Results:** It was hypothesized that a caring curriculum and participation in peer caring groups would foster development of peer caring behaviors. However, the results of this study showed no statistically significant differences (p <.05) between the perceptions of peer caring between generic BSN students and RN-BSN students(t(137)= -1.28, p=.20). The RN-BSN students reported a higher mean score (M= 80.489, sd= 13.4) on the PGCIS than did generic BSN students(M= 77.7, sd= 8.9). Results also showed no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of peer caring according to campus location (t(26)= 1.28, p=.21). Even so, there is clinical significance as the overall PGCIS scores reported by the entire sample were high (M= 79.5, sd= 12.0). (PGCIS range of scores is 16-96). This provides evidence to support immersion in a caring curriculum fosters development of peer caring behaviors.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Future research is needed to further examine the effects of peer caring groups and their influence on caring behaviors.

**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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