

Challenges of Nursing Students in their Clinical Learning Environment in three selected Nursing Schools in Sri Lanka

W. A. R. P. Menike

Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

The principle of the nursing profession is the clinical practice during the training of nursing students. Identifying challenges in this environment could improve the quality of nursing training. The purpose is to explore the challenges of student nurses in the clinical environment in Sri Lanka according to the viewpoints of ward sisters and nurse tutors. The nursing tutors from three selected nursing schools (the nursing schools in Badulla, Sri Jayawardenepura, Hambanthota) and ward sisters (n=18) from three General hospitals were selected as participants. The participants who had more than 05 years of experiences as nurse tutors and ward sisters were selected through the judgmental sampling method. Focus group discussions attended to collect data. The focus group schedule was planned according to the main themes developed by Saarikoski (2009, 2011). The main themes were Pedagogical Environment, Role of the Tutor and the Supervisory Relationship. The content analysis approach was used to analyze data.

Theme- Pedagogical Environment. Sub-themes identified were insufficient role models, poor communication within the health team, insufficient clinical teaching due to lack of proper formal clinical teaching guidelines. Theme- Role of the Tutor. One sub-theme identified as inadequate support to reduce the theory-practice gap. Theme- Supervisory Relationship. Lack of mutual interaction with the nursing staff due to workload was the sub-theme identified.

The stakeholders' challenges were inadequate role models, poor communication within the health team, inadequate clinical teaching, the theory practice gap, and poor relationship with nursing staff due to their workload. Creating an environment that supports positive role modelling, improving communication skills, designing new models to focus the creativity and innovation in clinical teaching methods and guidelines is critical. Bridging the gap between theory and practice and effective human resource management that match supply nurses to demand are some recommendations to challenge the challenges.

Keywords: Clinical Learning Environments, supervision, quality, role models

