

Student perceptions of the nursing practicum environment and its relationship to resilience and compassion satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Background

The clinical practicum is often the first time students encounter the work of nurses and the nursing practice environment. In order for students to be retained in and progress through their course we need to understand and respond to their clinical placement experience. The practice environment influences nurses' satisfaction with their work, levels of stress and resilience and their intent to remain employed. Studies show that resilience is reliably associated with lower levels of burnout and compassion fatigue, and higher levels of compassion satisfaction.

Aim/Purpose of the project

We used our newly developed measure, the Student Nurse Assessment of Practicum (SNAP) to examine its factor structure and relationship to measures of resilience and psychological well-being.

Methods/Process/Who is being studied

The sample consisted of 1353 final year nursing students enrolled at six universities across Australia. Student nurses completed an online survey consisting of validated measures to assess the constructs of resilience, affective state, compassion satisfaction, self-efficacy and mindfulness as well as the SNAP. Factor analysis was used to determine the structure of the measure and correlations were conducted to determine the strength of relationships between the SNAP and the variables of interest.

Results/Outcome

The SNAP consisted of two factors describing perceptions of the practicum experience and perceptions of the more general nursing experience. These factors had significant associations in the expected directions with positive affect, negative affect, mindfulness, resilience, compassion satisfaction and self-efficacy.

Recommendations/Conclusion

The SNAP is a valid 5-item measure of the practicum experience. The 3 items that make up the nurse experience factor could be administered to nurse graduates over time, initially from first to last clinical placement and then, once in the workforce, as a useful tracker of satisfaction with their role as a nurse and as a probable indicator of levels of compassion satisfaction.