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A comparison between the attitudes of nurses in Critical Care Units and other wards towards the nursing profession

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Aims: According to the influence of professional attitudes on job satisfaction and improving of professional performance of nurses as a key member of the health teams, the present study has been conducted to compare the attitudes of the nurses working in the Critical Care Units (CCUs) and other wards.

Methodology: This descriptive - analytic study was performed on 103 CCUs and 210 other wards nurses in hospital of Baqiyatallah (a.j.) and Jamaran cardiac hospital in early 2010. The subjects were selected through the systematic sampling method and investigated using a researcher-made questionnaire on attitudes towards the nursing profession. The data was analyzed using SPSS15 software and descriptive statistic and chi square tests.

Results: The study findings showed that 25.28% of CCUs nurses and 28.5% of and other wards nurses had negative or neutral attitudes towards their profession, and in spite of higher percentage of positive attitude among CCUs nurses, the difference was not statistically significant (p>0.05).

Conclusion: In regard to this result that approximately ⅓ of the nurses in both groups, CCUs and other wards, had negative attitudes towards their profession, it is recommended to accomplish extensive practical researches to identify the causes and factors affecting nurses' attitudes toward the profession and to pursue management measures in order to induce positive attitudes and finally nurses' job satisfaction to enhance the quality of patient care.

ABSTRACT

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1. Introduction

"Provocation" is the internal state and energy that persuades a person to a specific activity and considering provocative forces in state organizations especially in which the personnel have to do severe, responsible and low-salary activities is one of the most important management skills [1].

Nowadays the hygienic-care giving systems in the country are facing a lot of difficulties. One of the most important difficulties is undesirable quality of services given [2]. Regarding the nurses' psyche and body health as the key members of the health team [3] constituting the most part of the hygienic system's human forces[4] is regarding society's health and hygiene [5].The members of the remedial hygienic services team and

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especially nurses are the individuals who experience high levels of stress in their career life and stress is considered as a known component of modern nurses leading to professional depression providing the continuance or intensity of stress factors [6]. Attitudes have important role in leading human behavior toward goals, awareness of its consequences and effective processing of complicated information about life environment [7]. Knowledge, skill and positive attitudes are the elements that are suggested to improve nursing education and new nursing plans [8]. Likewise decreasing the job quality and indemnifying the patients, disaffection of nurses to their jobs will demoralize the nurses [9].Mental and job depression's syndrome and the feeling of prostration and accompanying disappointment emanate from negative attitude toward the job [10].

In Katsuki et al(2005) study on 189 nurses of a psycho and nerves hospital in Japan, a positive correlation has been observed between the nurses' attitudes and job exhaustion [11]. Exhaustion is a physical and mental syndrome accompany with tired leading to negative behavior and attitude toward the nurses themselves, carrier and patients, nonproductive job and absence, low morale and job dissatisfaction [12]. Nurses experience job exhaustion more than others and this job exhaustion decreases the quality of services submitted to the patients which leads to dissatisfaction of the medical services. Thus recognition and prevention of job exhaustion will have a great role in the patients' satisfaction [13]. Also, job exhaustion and demoralization cause demotivation and even students' school quit in this major so that the amount of that in different studies has been reported between 15 to 20 percent [14] and in Iran no exact statistics has been reported but in Julai et al (2006) up to 69% of the nurses in the research agreed to quit their jobs [15]. This negative viewpoint can lead to demotivation and even depression in working nurses. Lai-Lin et al (2008) have reported 48.9 % of the nurses in CCUs tended to quit their jobs and found a significant relationship between depression and this job quitting [16]. This student reduction or job quitting cause high costs for the educational system and on the other hand makes the remedial-hygienic system to face the lack of nurses. In various studies, professional attitudes and not understanding nurses' role have been stated as the key factor of this reduction [17] and even it has been emphasized to reinforce nursery students' motivation, to affiliate the students with the nursing professional identity and to reform negative attitudes before the students' entrance especially male students [18]. Job satisfaction is an important factor in function and the quality of services given by the hospital personnel like nurses. Job satisfaction rate presents the person's positive or negative attitude toward his/her job [5].

Due to the delicate and complicated situations which exist in controlling unwell patients in intensive care units, multiple job stresses incur on remedial and care giving processes [19]. Developed technology, existing conflictions in human correspondences , moral issues, dissension with nursing managements, observing patients' mortality, lack of enough information , job pressures and not having access to job ideals are the basic stressors in intensive care units which can lead to job exhaustion as a prevalent response to existing stress. In fact the nurses in intensive care units face job stress more than other wards nurses [20].

Researches such as Evagelou (2005), Surgenor (2005) and Namdar (2008) on the nurses' attitudes toward nursing, especially mental nurses and working in psychological patients units and researches like McLafferty (2005) on the nurses' attitudes toward elderly have been reported [7,21,23] and limited studies have been done on the nurses' attitudes toward their jobs. One of the studies on the nurses' attitudes toward their jobs is Banaderakhshan et al study (2002) aiming at the comparison of awareness, attitudes and functions between the working nurses and nursing students .this paper has shown that 52 % of the students and the nurses had positive attitudes ,46.3 % indiscriminate and only 1.7

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% had negative attitudes toward nursing profession [24].Also Julai et al (2006) aiming at determining the attitudes of nursing students of Tehran medical science universities toward nursing profession and the reasons of quitting this job, have reported that only 18 % of nursing students had positive attitude toward their profession[15] .

Job exhaustion originates from negative attitude toward the job [10]. Positive attitude improves the nurses' professional work and finally nurses' job satisfaction leads to development in the quality of services given to the patients [5]. According to the fact that the relationship between the nurses' attitudes and job satisfaction has been emphasized, even in this regard Bowers and Lutz (2000) state that positive attitude determines 53 % of job satisfaction [25] and due to the fact that despite various studies on the stress of the intensive care units, there has been no exact study to compare and survey the attitudes of the nurses in intensive care units, this study has been done aiming at the "comparison of the nurses' attitudes toward nursing profession between intensive care units and other wards."

2. Methodology

In this descriptive analytic study, in early 2010, the attitudes of nurses in Baqiyatallah hospital and Jamaran cardiac hospital toward nursing profession were studied. It was done in regular random sampling. A hundred and three nurses working in CCUs with average age of 6.5 ± 37.39 and two hundred and ten working nurses in other wards with average age of 7.66 ±36.54 and according to the study entrance criterion, tendency for cooperation for both groups, working as permanent or temporary in each of the mentioned hospitals and at least with the associate diploma in nursing have been studied. In this study, a questionnaire consisted of two parts was used in order to gather the information.

The first part was used for demographic properties including age, gender, educational degree, marriage status, background, employment status, and salary satisfaction level, number of children, overtime hours and working ward and also there was a questionnaire on attitude toward the nursing profession. Banaderakhshan et al (2002) designed the questionnaire on attitude toward the nursing profession and then its justifiability and perpetuity were confirmed and its scientific reliance was determined by retesting and analysis [24]. This questionnaire consisted of twelve questions was the basis of the early work. We used content reliability method based on the professors' viewpoints for the second study of its reliability. Finally three questions were added to the questionnaire on the attitude toward the nursing profession and the total questions of this questionnaire were fifteen. The perpetuity of the questionnaire has been confirmed by the internal parallelism and Cronbach Alpha of 0.97.

To gather the information, according to the sample size that was estimated at 340 , at first the wards were selected randomly among all non-critical wards of two hospitals of Baqiyatallah and Jamaran as the chosen hospitals of Baqiyatallah medical university and after reference and introduction, all the nurses in the selected wards and also all the nurses in CCUs that had the criteria to entrance to the study were asked to fill the questionnaire on demographic properties and attitude toward nursing profession. Finally after reduction of 27 subjects (about 8 %) due to not delivering or inadequate responses to the questions, 313 questionnaire (103 related to the nurses working in CCUs and 210 questionnaire related to nurses working in other wards) were analyzed. The data has been analyzed using SPSS15 software and descriptive statistic and Chi-square tests. In this research, in moral case, the subjects' participation was due to their own tendency, meanwhile the questionnaires were filled unknown and the results of the subjects' analysis were private.

3. Results

The age range in this study was 24-50 years old and 82.5 % of the subjects were married. 90.3 % had B.A. Also 27 % of the nurses in critical units and 22.7 % in non-critical wards

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Table1: The subjects' relative and absolute abundance

Variant	group	critical units		other wards		Chi square test
Gender	Male	50	48.5%	127	60.5%	0.03
	female	53	51.5%	83	39.5%	
Education	Associate diploma	2	1.9%	15	7.2%	0.08
	B.A	93	90.3%	186	88.5%	
	M.A	8	7.8%	9	4.3%	
Marital status	single	18	17.5%	35	16.7%	0.4
	married	85	82.5%	175	83.3%	
Salary satisfaction	dissatisfied	28	27%	48	22.7%	0.7
	Relatively satisfied	42	41%	92	43.8%	
	satisfied	33	32%	70	33.5%	

were dissatisfied with their salary. The results of 210 nurses in other wards indicated that 83.3 % of the subjects were married and 39.5 % were women. On the basis of education, 92.8% of the subjects had B.A or higher degree (table 1).

The study findings on the questions about profession attitude showed that according to the differences in the subjects' viewpoints on some questions, the findings were not statistically significant. One of them was the question related to "changing the major if it's possible" in which 39% of the nurses in CCUs and 48.7% of the nurses in other wards stated that if it was possible, they would change their major (table2).

Also, on the basis of nurses' attitudes, the results explain that generally 74.72% of the nurses working in CCUs had positive attitudes and 25.28% had neutral attitudes toward nursing profession. Whereas 71.5 % of the nurses working in other wards had positive attitudes, 27.42 % had neutral attitudes and 1.08 % had negative attitudes (diagram 1). In order to compare the attitudes of the nurses working in CCUs and other wards of the selected hospitals, the statistic Chi-square test showed that there is no statistical significant difference between the attitudes of these two groups toward the nursing profession (table 3).

4. Discussion

Nursing is the major group of health system and has significant potential energy which is able to have impact on the quality of health care providing [24].The nurses working in intensive care units, significantly, show depression, anxiety and inducement, irritability and anger more than other nurses [26].

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Table2: The comparison between the attitudes of the nurses working in critical care units and other wards in relation to each question of the questionnaire on attitude toward the nursing profession.

	Critical care units nurses			other wards nurses			
Questions	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Negative	p
Doing nursing responsibilities is pleasurable.	87.25%	10.79%	1.96%	78.47%	14.36%	7.17%	0.09
If it is possible, I change my major	39%	16%	45%	48.1%	17.8%	34.1%	0.1
Removal of patient's need is the greatest pleasure.	93.06%	3.97%	2.97%	90.4%	7.2%	2.4%	0.5
If I was born again, I would like to be a nurse again.	39.6%	20.8%	39.6%	36.6%	21.5%	41.9%	0.8
Nurses are not good parents for their children.	29%	22%	49%	33.6%	22.1%	44.3%	0.6
I'm honored to introduce myself as a nurse in the society.	50.5%	23.7%	25.8%	55.2%	24.1%	20.7%	0.5
Nurses' punctuality and responsible feeling are essential.	98.1%	1.9%	0%	96.2%	2.4%	1.4%	0.4
Nurses need to be patient.	98.03%	1.97%	0%	99.03%	0.97%	0%	0.4
This profession prevents nurses from doing other roles.	38.6%	19.8%	41.6%	44.7%	15.4%	39.9%	0.4
Nursing doesn't need academic educations.	4.95%	2.97%	92.08%	8.7%	4.8%	86.5%	0.3
Nursing is a profession needed for the society.	100%	0%	0%	97.6%	2.4%	0%	0.1
Nursing services means worship.	91.2%	5.9%	2.9%	93.7%	4.9%	1.4%	0.6
I am likely to get promotion in my major.	71.8%	14.1%	14.1%	64.6%	18.9%	16.5%	0.4
Remedial members respect the nurses.	35%	30%	35%	41.8%	24.5%	33.7%	0.4
Working in hospital environment is pleasurable.	55.9%	25.5%	18.6%	53.4%	23.6%	23%	0.6

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Table3: The comparison of the total attitudes of nurses working in critical care units and other wards toward nursing profession.

	the total attitudes toward nursing profession					
Chi-square	Critical care units Nurses			Other wards nurses		
test	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Positive	Neutral	negative
0.55	74.72%	25.28%	0%	71.5%	27.42%	1.08%

The results of this study indicated that more than 74% of the nurses in CCUs had positive attitudes toward nursing and no negative attitude was obtained in this group. On the other hand in the group of nurses working in other words, this amount was obtained with little discrepancy and this indicates that although the abundance of negative attitude toward nursing in both groups is in accordance with Banaderakhshan et all's study(2002) reporting 1.7 % of the nurses had negative attitudes toward nursing, this finding is in contrast with the results of Julai et all' study (2006) in which 18.3 % of the nurses had negative attitudes toward nursing[15] .This difference can be caused by differences in information gathering tools. Likewise in this study no statistical significant difference was determined between the nurses working in intensive care units and other wards.

No similar study has been reported on the comparison of the attitudes of nurses working in intensive care units and other wards but this finding was not in accordance with the results of Payami 's (2000) and Winberg's (2000) researches which reported more job depression in the nurses of intensive care units due to the patients' need to intense caring [12,20].And despite the fact that it is expected thatablt due to hard atmosphere of intensive care units, unwell patients, much mortality or job stress [12,19], there would be negative attitudes toward nursing profession but the nurses 'attitudes in these wards didn't show any difference with the attitudes of other wards nurses .It is likely that specialty of intensive care units ,fewer patients in this unit and nurses' less relations with patient's companies and also ease of access to the doctors and more appropriate relations between nurses and doctors and much independence and satisfaction and effectiveness feeling for the patients who need intense caring, compensate job psychic stress. Although there has been no statistical significant difference, the attitudes of the nurses' in intensive care units became more positive comparing to other wards. In this case, Mahmoudi et al (2007) also reported that job nature has been accounted as one of the most important internal factors in nurses' job motivation [2].

Even, on one of the questions of attitudes related to changing the major, fifty percent of the nurses working in non-critical units had positive answers whereas this amount was forty percent for the nurses in intensive care units. This finding emphasizes on other findings of this research and besides it is in accordance to the results of the reported studies on job dissatisfaction of nursing profession by Yom et al(2009) (41.4%) and Price et al (2002) (50%), [27.28].In general, not having statistical significant discrepancy on the nurses' attitudes in intensive care units and other units and even being more positive is in contrast with the report of other studies on being stressful due to unwell patients and more job exhaustion in these units. For this reason it is recommended to do more comprehensive studies and especially to compare the factors affecting the nurses'

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attitudes working in these wards. Impossibility to generate this finding to nursing society is one of this study's limitations.

5. Conclusion

According to the results of this study, though no significant difference was found between the attitudes of the nurses working in intensive care units and other wards, it was observed that in both groups, one third of the subjects had negative attitudes which is needed to be considered by the authorities adopting management plans to induce positive attitudes and finally nurses' job satisfaction to improve the quality of caring.

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