BREAKING BARRIERS IN NURSING EDUCATION: CAN DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOSTER CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Background

In a changing healthcare environment, nurses are increasingly confronted with diverse patient populations, necessitating an expanded understanding of cultural competence. E-learning, with its capacity for immersive and adaptive content delivery, is proving to be a transformative tool to meet this need. Using digital platforms, nursing education can provide comprehensive, context-rich training modules that promote a deep understanding of different cultural nuances [1–2]. Such platforms not only provide the flexibility and accessibility that modern education requires, but also ensure that nurses are equipped with the skills to deliver holistic, culturally sensitive care to all patients.

Aim

The aim of this pilot study was to assess the cultural competence of nursing students after the first introduction of cultural eContent in their nursing curriculum.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study with 145 second- and third-year nursing students as a convenience sample was used in May 2023. Their cultural competence was assessed using the Cultural Competence Assessment Tool (CCATool) administered via an online survey. Data analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS and included descriptive statistics, the chi-square test and, due to a non-normal distribution (confirmed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, $p < 0.05$), non-parametric tests such as Mann Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis H and Wilcoxon signed-rank. The significance threshold was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

Results

The results show that students have a relatively high level of cultural competence as indicated by $M = 28.37$ (SD = 8.145; 95% confidence interval [26.94, 29.80], $p < 0.001$). There was a remarkable discrepancy between subjective perceptions of cultural awareness, knowledge and skills and their objective measurement. Participants scored lower on the rated statements than on the self-rated statements ($p < 0.001$). Conversely, the scores for the cultural sensitivity subscale were significantly higher for the rated statements than for the self-rated scores on the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) ($p = 0.004$). In addition, a significant difference in cultural competence was found between students who had lived abroad for more than 6 months ($M = 27.23$) and those who had not, with the latter group scoring higher on the CCATool ($M = 28.61$). Full-time students also scored higher than part-time students ($M = 29.33$ compared to $M = 26.21$), with the difference being statistically significant ($p = 0.046$).

Discussion

The use of e-learning to promote cultural competence in nursing students has shown promising results. The apparent discrepancies between subjective and objective measurements highlight the importance of structured assessments. Experiences, such as study abroad, and type of study also have a significant impact on cultural competence, suggesting that diverse experiences enhance cultural understanding in nursing education.

Implications and future perspectives

E-learning can improve cultural competence in nursing and have a broader impact on the quality of care, as it is accessible to a larger number of students. Diverse experiences and structured assessments are crucial. Future research should include pre- and post-testing, a mixed-method approach, and an exploration of digital curriculum design and its influence on students' practical skills.

References

1. Farokhzadian, J. 662–671, 2015.
2. Rahimi, M. 445, 2023.