

Literature Review of Depression among Nursing College Students

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Abstract: Depression among nursing students has been studied over the years and has been found to be a prominent issue. These articles have researched different factors and variables that affect depression among these students focusing on various sample sizes from different countries. This paper reports a literature review that aimed to explore the importance of identifying stressors that contribute to depression among undergraduate nursing students, to conclude that a study should be carried out in Saudi Arabia regarding this topic.

Keywords: Depression, nursing students, prominent issue.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to various research articles, the rate of depression among undergraduate nursing students ranges from 20% to 70%. Many articles have researched different factors and variables affecting depression among nursing students. Among those factors are stress, stress management, time management, anxiety, and mental health. The studies focus on various sample sizes from different countries though there are no study focuses on undergraduate nursing students in Saudi Arabia. Since these factors and the correlation with depression among nursing students are so significant it is imperative that a study be done in Saudi Arabia and see if the trends found elsewhere continue.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The American Psychiatric Association defines depression as a medical illness that negatively affects the way one feels and can cause feelings of sadness, loss of interest in activities, and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems. Depression affects around one in 15 adults every year and one in six people will experience depression in their lifetime. On average, depression first appears during the late teens to mid-20s and it is seen that women are more likely to experience depression (Parekh, 2017). The most common variable that affects depression is stress. Detection of symptoms is important because stress can lead to low productivity, minimize quality-of-life and increased suicidal thoughts and tendencies. It is seen that college students undergo tremendous amounts of stress throughout their journey. Nursing students tend to experience the stress of their coursework and college journey more than other fields, but the knowledge about the stress undergone in this journey and the symptoms it causes is limited (Ekanayaka, 2016). There have been various studies surrounding depression and stress affecting depression within the nursing field and nursing students (Ekanayaka, 2016; Moreira, 2013; Papazisis, 2008; Petrariu, 2017). The studies have identified different risk factors and identifiers of burnout and depression as a result of the stress of coursework and the field. The studies have shown variations in different areas in the world. To our knowledge there have been no studies that researched the effects of stress and depression among undergraduate nursing students in Saudi Arabia. The aim of this review is to assess the prevalence of high amounts of stress among nursing students from previous studies to prove that one should be done in Saudi Arabia.

As stated by the American Psychiatric Association depression usually first appears during the late teens to late 20s. The sample sizes for most of the studies were college students. This helps to limit the sample size as well as show more significant results as a result of the fact that people become symptomatic during those college years. In McKay's study from 1978, the mean age of males and females in the sample population was 21.5. In the study by Diaz-Godiño et al., the mean age was 22.5 years, and the greatest concentration was students between the ages of 21 and 23. In another the sample consisted of college students around the age of 24 years old. These ages are significant considering the statistics from the American Psychiatric Association which is why studying the sample size of college level students has a higher significance in studying older adults in this case.

As an addition to the factor of age and its relationship to depression and symptoms another significant factor is the field that these undergraduate are studying. "The stressors in nursing education have been consistently acknowledged in the literature for almost 50 years. As early as the 1930s, nurses and student nurses were being polled about the problems and difficulties related to training (McKay 1978)." Many of the stressors identified in those early years of nursing education are parallel to the stressors on nursing students today (Papazisis, 2008). The sample population focused on in this study is undergraduate nursing students. It is well known the nursing is one of the most stressful professions in the world therefore adjusting to a career in nursing is very stressful (McKay, 1978). In the nursing field patient care includes making important decisions and the insecurity and anxiety from the decision-making can cause or worsen stress (Ekanayaka, 2016; Moreira, 2013; Papazisis, 2008; Petrariu, 2017). As well as patient care in stressful situations nursing students have to acquire skills in the lab in clinical settings and undergo extensive a valuations which can lead to an addition of stress on top of what is already experienced in the field. As a result, it is important to identify stressors within the nursing field and for undergraduate with in coursework In order to lessen the stressors and the incidence of different mental detriment as a result that result .

According to various research articles, the rate of depression among undergraduate nursing students ranges from 20% - 70%. In the study that viewed depression among freshmen nursing students, 20% of first year nursing students have symptoms of depression and the factors that influence this are emotional exhaustion instability (Petrariu, 2017). This study also showed that more emotionally exhausted individuals have higher chances incidence of depression symptoms. Another study showed that medium stress levels are the most frequent among nursing students (Moreira, 2013). The study that assessed students in Sri Lanka showed that around 51% of students had severe symptoms of depression, 60% of anxiety, and 83% stress (Ekanayaka, 2016). The study showed a significant positive relationship between depression and anxiety and stress and the factors associated with this correlation where age academic year satisfaction to name a few. Overall all of the studies suggest that nursing students experience different levels of stress and depression that are correlated with their academic field of study. All of the studies focus on specific nursing populations nursing student populations in various areas around the world from Cairo to the United States.

All of the above studies there were specific factors viewed that were unique to each population study location. Since the incidence of stressors and depression related symptoms are very significant among nursing students it is important to continue the studies and to continue identifying influencing factors. The results of the studies are used to identify factors and use them in nursing education and counseling services. In Saudi Arabia there is little evidence to relate meant so health problems and stress among nursing students. There are no reported studies to assess the relationship between stress, and depression among undergraduate nursing students. Therefore, a study could be significant in identifying and improving the nursing field and academia for students in this field.

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