



IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSGENDER HEALTHCARE CONTENT IN A NURSE PRACTITIONER PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Health disparities continue to exist despite the increasing social acceptance of the transgender population. The healthcare provider's knowledge and attitude towards transgender individuals impacts transgender health (IOM, 2011). Many providers are not comfortable when dealing with transgender patients and do not have the knowledge to address their healthcare issues (IOM, 2011). One of the goals of Healthy People 2020 is to improve the health, safety, and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals (Healthy People, 2014). The IOM (2011) also recommends improving access to healthcare by improving healthcare provider's knowledge and attitude towards LGBT patients. There is a lack of content and time spent on transgender care in the advanced practice-nursing curriculum (Lim & Hsu, 2016). The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of implementing transgender healthcare content in a graduate nurse practitioner (NP) program.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the competence and confidence level of nurse practitioners towards transgender health care?
- How effective is the implementation of transgender educational content in the competence and confidence level of nurse practitioner students towards transgender health care?

METHODS

Study participants

- A convenience sample of 68 nurse practitioner students enrolled in a MSN
- Nurse practitioner students in two courses were selected over two semesters. One course, advance health assessment and a second course, primary adult care
- Eligibility requirement included enrollment to MSN program. All students who participated in the educational intervention and completed the surveys were included in the study.

Instrument

Assessing Medical Attitudes toward Transgender Care survey (Shukla, Dundas, Asp, Saltzman & Duggan, 2015) was used in this study. The 21 item survey instrument was developed to examine attitudes of medical students and nurse practitioners towards transgender care. The tool is made up of demographic questions, questions regarding experiences with transgender patients, educational hours on transgender health care, assessment of knowledge competence on transgender health issues and questions on comfort or competence in providing various aspects of transgender care e.g. safe sex, hormone therapy and gender reassignment surgery. This study reported a Cronbach alpha of .754 for internal consistency.

Procedure

The study was conducted in the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters. Prior to the educational intervention, the students completed the Assessing Medical Attitudes Toward Transgender Care survey. The educational content included assigned readings and videos prior to class and a PowerPoint presentation. The educational content was delivered through a 60-minute classroom discussion that focused on definitions, best practices in conducting health assessments, health disparities, cultural competence and transgender-specific healthcare. The primary objectives of the transgender health care content were:

1. Discuss best practices for obtaining a health history and performing an appropriate physical exam in transgender patients.
2. Identify strategies to effectively address healthcare issues in primary care among transgender patients.

RESULTS

Characteristics of the respondents (N= 68)

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Range 24- 57 years		
Mean- 35 years		
Major:		
AGNP	33	48.5
FNP	35	51.5
Gender:		
Male	8	11.8
Female	60	88.2
Personally know transgender patients?		
No	15	22.1
Yes	53	77.9
Provided care to transgender patients?		
No	36	52.9
Yes	32	47.1
How many transgender patients have you cared for?		
0	35	51.5
1	20	29.4
2	8	11.8
3	5	7.4

Pre and Post Test Results

Overall, results of t-test showed significance between pre- and post tests ($p < .046$)

- Hours of Education for transgender health care: increased from 1.5 hours to 3 hours ($p < 0.003$)
- Hours of education for transgender sexual health: increased from 1. To 1.8 hours ($p < 0.003$)
- Competence in dealing with transgender sexual health concerns: improved from "somewhat uncomfortable" to "somewhat comfortable"
- The results found that in the posttests student's personal comfort levels in the various aspects of transgender care moderately increased in all areas, except for: "Being known as a provider of care to transgender patients":
 - Providing care to a transgender in a clinical setting and counseling a transgender patient on safer sex practices
 - Prescribing hormone therapy
 - Referring for gender reassignment
 - Providing prostate exams for Male to Female
 - Providing Pap smears to Female to Male

DISCUSSION

- The results of the study support studies by Shukla et al. (2015) and Sanchez, Rabatin, Sanchez, Hubbard and Kalet (2006) who also reported that education on transgender care increases comfort and competence to this population.
- Nurses who have cared for transgender patients felt more comfortable and competent to provide care to this population. Students reported they were less uncomfortable because of the education content on transgender care provided in both advanced health assessment and primary adult courses.
- Limitations to the study include small sample size and is only generalizable to the nurse practitioner students in this university

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