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Assessment of the desire for cultural competency of student nurses in Sri Lanka

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Cultural competence is a crucial need for nurses to accomplish the ability to work effectively within the cultural context of a client. The level of cultural encounter and cultural desire directly affect for the level of cultural competency. The purpose of this study was to investigate the level of cultural encounter and cultural desire among third year nursing students in Government Schools of Nursing in Sri Lanka. A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted in Schools of Nursing Jaffna and Kurunegala as a cohort sample among all the Schools of Nursing in Sri Lanka. Random sampling technique was used to select participants from the total population of 305 students. A pretested, self-administered questionnaire was used. The data were analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Studies version 22. Ethical approval was granted from the Ethical Review Committee of the International Institute of Health Sciences, Welisara. According to the findings, Response rate was 100%. All the participants (n=171) were in 20-30 years age group. Majority of the participants were female (n=156, 91%), Sinhala (n=154, 90.1%) and Buddhist (n=151, 88.3%). Of them, 82% (n=140) participants were educated up to Advanced Level. Majority of the participants strongly agreed for the statement of "I am happy to encounter (meet) with people from different cultures"(n=91, 53.2%). However, only 20 respondents strongly agreed with the statement, "I am in contact with individuals who provide health care services for groups that are culturally, racially and ethnically diverse" (11.7%). Overall mean score on cultural encounter was 3.5 ± 0.6 . Majority of the sample had agreed with the statements on cultural desire sub scale. Ninety respondents strongly agreed (52.7%) and 40 respondents agreed (40.1%) with the statement "I like to get education, training and experience to enhance my competence to care for culturally and ethnically diverse clients". Overall mean score on cultural desire was 4.2 ± 0.5 . As the student nurses had moderate level of competence on cultural encounter and adequate desire to interact with people from different cultures, these results will provide support for the nursing schools to include transcultural training when revising the nursing curriculum.

Keywords: Cultural desire, cultural encounter, student nurse