

Assessment of Caring Behaviour of Nurses in Sri Lanka: Perspective of Patients and Student Nurses

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Background: Caring is the main theme of nursing. Caring behaviour implies acts, verbal behaviour and non-verbal behaviour of the nurses towards patients to convey caring and attention. Caring behaviours can significantly impact on patient satisfaction.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to determine the perception of patients and student nurses on caring behaviour of nurses in surgical-medical wards at Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya (THK) in Sri Lanka.

Methods: This descriptive study was conducted in September 2018. The study population was patients who were 18 – 70-year-old and 3rd-year student nurses. They were from the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Ruhuna and College of Nursing Galle. The sample was chosen randomly. Validated and modified questionnaires consisted with 5 Point-Likert scales were employed; Caring Behaviors (PCB) were assessed according to the themes of professionalism, trusting interpersonal relationship and skills of registered nurses. Watson's theory of human caring was the theoretical background of this study. Investigator administered questionnaire was used for the patients and self-administered questionnaire was used for the student nurses. Cronbach's alpha was 0.88 and 0.93, respectively. Descriptive analysis was performed.

Results: The mean value on the perception of caring behaviour of the patients (N=300) and student nurses (N=123) were 4.07 ± 0.54 and 3.47 ± 0.65 respectively. Under the theme of professionalism, the patients stated that 68.7% of nurses conversed in a polite and kind manner and 41.35% of nurses never provide information prior to investigations. Further 79%, 60% and 16% of the patients stated that they always received care and medication on time, nurses were quick to react to their requisitions and nurses never or occasionally understood their feelings. Results on trusting interpersonal relationship revealed that; 62.3% of nurses were always friendly, 32% nurses practised therapeutic touch and 20% nurses never asked required questions to clarify patients' needs. Patients perceived that 47.3% of nurses never provide examination results and 22.4% of the nurses never given enough information regarding prevention, diet, discharge plan, etc. There was a significant difference between patients' and student nurses' overall perception of staff nurses' caring behaviour (significance value = $0.038 < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Patients perceived greatly well about nurses caring behaviour and it was above average level. Information provision and empathetic approach should be improved through in-service programs and curricular revisions. Patients' awareness through nursing practice on ideal nursing care should be improved to maintain the quality of care. Jean Watson's theory of nursing care is recommended to incorporate with the improvement of caring behaviour of nurses towards patients' satisfaction.

Keywords: Nurses' Caring Behaviors, Watson's Theory of Human Caring, Student Nurse

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