THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FREE FLAP MONITORING TRAINING IN NURSES' KNOWLEDGE AND THEIR CONFIDENCE IN PRACTICE

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Nursing monitoring of microsurgical free flap is a relatively new concept in the Nursing field in Vietnam. It requires careful monitoring to detect early signs of compromise. Close monitoring is crucial following successful flap surgery. However, there is no nursing training institution and no teaching materials has been established in Vietnam. Therefore, the continuing education courses should be provided to help nurses advance their knowledge, develop new skills and support new graduate nurses to promote their confidence and competence in practice. The purpose of this study was to assess nurses' knowledge and their confidence levels in microsurgical free flap monitoring and evaluate the effectiveness of the first stage of the nursing continuing education program. A quasi-experiment study was carried out throughout the period (January – September 2019). The participants consisted of 22 nurses working in the Department of Maxillofacial and Plastic Surgery. The self-administered questionnaire was translated from Steven C. Bonawitz's questionnaire and modified by an expert panel of Plastic Surgeons and Senior Nurses. The analyzed data showed increases in the mean scores of knowledge from 1.28 to 1.50; the percentage of nurses who got mean scores above average increased from 21.1% to 50%. There was no significant difference between pre-test mean score and post-test mean score *($p>0.05$);* The confidence levels of nurses was significantly dropped, especially doppler assessment and bleeding from flap edges or from a pinprick of the flap surface *($p<0.05$)*. Most of the nurses concerned about the frequency for monitoring were hard to follow due to the heavy workload; some nurses failed to grasp the information about the proper vascular pedicle positions and the appropriate positions for patients and free flaps; some nurses felt difficult to recognize the flap appearance changing. The nursing continuing education program has resulted in some improvements in the knowledge of nurses but it has been not enough to help them more confident in their works. It should improve the quality of nursing education and enhance the delivery of microsurgical free flap monitoring training for nurses.

Keywords*: **free flap monitoring, education, nursing knowledge.***

Biography

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Session name/ number: Trauma Surgery / Track 13

Category: (Oral presentation/ Poster presentation) Poster presentation