Title: Perceptions of Nursing as a Career among Nursing Students

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Nursing provides job security and employability; however the possible hazard of nursing duties with infectious disease transmitted causing death of healthcare personnel may inhibit nursing students to enter the profession. With better understanding about nursing students' perceptions of nursing as a career may be beneficial to their recruitment and retention.

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of nursing as a career among university-based general nursing students.

A cross-sectional survey with a convenience sampling of 283 university-based general nursing students aged 19-32 was conducted using Nursing Career Perception Questionnaire (NCPQ). The content validity index (CVI) was 0.92. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.78-0.89 with test-retest reliability at 0.74 - 0.85 ($p < 0.001$) in two weeks apart.

There is a discrepancy in programme choice. About 254 nursing students (89.8%) took general registered nursing programmes and other nursing students (n =29, 10.2%) prefer other courses. Less than half (n = 139, 49.1%) would 'definitely' choose nursing as their career. Nursing students with more positive influential variables would hold more positive perceptions of nursing as a career ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$), leading to stronger drive to select nursing as a career ($r = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$). Besides, students' personality ($r = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$) and health work experiences ($r = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$) had statistically significant positive correlation with perceptions of nursing as a career.

The nursing students provided an overall impression about both positive and negative perceptions of nursing as a career that may be useful for nurse educators and administrators in career counseling and recruitment processes.

Keywords: nursing students, perceptions of nursing as a career, goal to choose nursing as a career, career counseling, shift duty, possible contact with infectious patients

Biography

Belle Yuen Ching LAU has been a Registered Nurse since 1996. She completed her Master Degree in Nursing with extensive clinical experiences working in different specialties. She has been teaching health care for 9 years in Department of Applied Science, Hong Kong Institue of Vocational Education (Kwai Chung). She also acts as programme leader of three higher diploma programmes, with over 400 health care students per year.

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