Registered Nurses' Attitudes and Practices Towards Physical Examinations in the Clinical Setting

Abstract

This article addressed the issue of using physical exam in nursing. Nurses hold different attitudes toward using physical exam in the clinical settings. These attitudes determine embracing physical examination in practice. So, the aim of the study was to examine registered nurses' attitudes and practices, identify perceived barriers, and to identify the factors which influence the performance and the attitudes towards physical examinations. Results showed that even though nurses reported performing physical exam often, they had negative attitudes toward it. Stress and performing physical examinations on someone of the opposite gender (n=236 ; 87.4%) were the main barriers. Nurse's level of education influenced the attitude (t=-4.3; p<.01). These results indicated that RNs recognize the necessity of physical examinations, but they face many barriers and challenges which hinder performance of the examination. Cultural factors and experience were the most influential barriers which deter performance of the physical examination.

Keywords: nursing, physical exam, practices, barriers, attitudes, predictors, health assessment, nurses, culture, clinical setting, imaging techniques.