Physical Medicine-2013
OMICS Group Conferences
Accelerating Scientific Discovery
International Conference and Exhibition on
Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
August 19-21, 2013 Embassy Suites Las Vegas, USA

Nurses attitudes towards children with disabilities: An objective measurement

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Abstract

The attitudes of U.S. nursing students toward children with disabilities have not been adequately measured over time and after an educational intervention. Disability content has not been a priority in nursing education and, if present, the focus has been on adults with disabilities. The attitudes of nurses play a significant role in the provision of quality healthcare services. This experimental research measured the attitudes of graduating nursing students toward children with disabilities utilizing the Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP-B) before and after disability education. The differences between the groups was measured at pretest (time 1), immediate posttest (time 2) after an educational module, and delayed posttest (time 3) one month follow up, utilizing repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). Multivariate tests for within subject effect of the ATDP-B demonstrated that the dependent variable of attitudes as measured by the ATDP-B scale changes over time and after an educational module based on children with disabilities were (F= [2, 85] = 28.59, $p < .01$). It was discovered that the ATDP-B level changes over time, dependent on the group (F [2, 85] = 51.15, $p < .01$). Also, the between subjects main effect of group was significant across ATDP-B measurements (F = [1, 86] = 32.53, p <.01). The results of this research suggest that there is a significant difference in means of ATDP-B measurements between groups, which indicates that the graduating nurses who received disability education performed significantly better on an assessment of attitudes toward children with disabilities than those who did not receive the education. The findings of this research should compel nursing faculty to reevaluate curriculum content and provide specific attitude measurements of nursing students at various levels of education.

Biography

Cervasio has been a registered professional nurse for over 39 years serving clients in a variety of health care specialties, settings, and institutions. My research interests, presentations, and publications are geared towards children with developmental and intellectual disabilities on a national and international level. I am particularly interested in the Institute of Medicine report concerning special needs children who continue to be underserved in health care. Specific interest in the QSEN (quality and safety in nursing education) and KSA (skills, knowledge, and attitudes) of nursing students and nurses have fueled my research concerning attitudes of healthcare professionals towards children with special needs.

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