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Nurses' Participation in Continuing Professional Education in Trinidad and Tobago: A Case for Chronic Disease Self-Management Education

Onuoha, PC

University of the West Indies, *Trinidad*

Abstract

Aim: To assess the extent of nurses' participation in continuing professional education in Trinidad and Tobago, especially in chronic disease (diabetes) management. Methods: 1,032 registered nurses employed in the services of five Regional Health Authorities between November 2011 and April 2012 completed the self-administered questionnaire previously pre-tested on a cohort of registered nurses. The questionnaires did not contain any personal identifiers but were serially numbered to avoid receiving duplicate copies from a participant. The questionnaires were distributed to all health institutions within the regional health authorities. The head nurse in each facility assisted in the distribution and collection of completed questionnaires from the volunteers. Results: Of 1,032 nurses that participated, 56% were ignorant of continuing education. Of the 44.4% that knew about continuing education, only 26% of them have had the privilege of attending some continuing education activities ($p<0.05$). Again, of the 26% of the nurses that have attended some continuing education activities, most (91%) were within the country while only 6% were outside the Caribbean ($p<0.05$). Interestingly, more than 87% of the nurses would like to participate in continuing education activities out of which 64% would like to be identified as specialist nurses if given the opportunity. Conclusions: This study shows that while a small percentage of nurses previously participated in continuing education activities, a significant majority (87%) indicated interest to participate in the future and even become specialist nurses. We therefore advocate that nurses' employment contracts should include incentives for continuing professional education to encourage future development of nursing profession.

Biography

Nasibeh Vatankhah is a medical doctor who graduated in 2009 from Tehran University of Medical Sciences. She has more than 9-years of medical research experience in diabetes and diabetic foot. She has been a researcher at the Research Institute for Endocrine Sciences (RIES) in Tehran since 2011. She has published more than 10 papers, and has co-authored a book entitled: Study Guides on Common Endocrine Disorders. Currently she is residing in the USA continuing her medical studies and her research work with RIES. She is a member of Iranian Medical Council, Wound Healing Discussion Board of Biochemistry Dept, Tehran University.