PERCEIVED STRESSORS AMONG KUWAITI BSN STUDENTS ON THE ASPECTS OF NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

NADA ALSHEMMARI

E-mail: nada4545al@gmail.com

Abstract - Nursing is not an easy occupation because nurses deal with critical issues every day that make it a stressful job. The purpose of the current study is to identify the stressor factors that cause stress to Kuwaiti nursing students. This study employed a quantitative approach using a questionnaire survey to collect the data from 57 bachelor nursing students. The questionnaire consisted of 10 variables that can cause stress to the nursing students which are as follows: 1) theory, 2) examinations, 3) assignments, 4)workload, 5) classrooms hours, 6) clinical placements, 7) the death of a patient, 8) relationships with ward staff, 9) relationships with nurse tutors, and 10) relationships with clinical placement coordinator. The results of the current study demonstrated that the highest factors that caused stress to the nursing students were: the death of a patient, examinations, and theory. While the lowest factors that caused stress to the students were: relationships with ward staff, relationships with clinical placement coordinator, and relationships with nurse tutors. These results showed that the academic issues stress students more than the clinical issues. At the end of the study recommendations for educators and researches have been provided.

Keywords - Nursing Students, Stress, Clinical Factors, Academic Factors

I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem of the study is to investigate the perceived stressors among Kuwaiti BSN students and the factors that contribute to the stressors during their study at the college.

II. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of the study is to study the perceived stressors among Kuwaiti BSN students by investigating the types of stressors, identify factors that contribute to the development of stressors and expose the possible methods to prevent stress.

1. What are the types of stressors?
2. What are the factors that are causing stress to nursing students?
3. What are the methods that are used to prevent stress to nursing student.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many researchers (Hamill, 1995, Mahat, 1996) found in their studies that the programs at the college of nursing cause stress to nurse students. The review of literature includes factors that cause stress to nursing students, types of stressors, and the methods that are used to reduce stress of student nurses (see Table1).

In the USA, Clarke and Ruffin (1992) conducted a study to examine the sources of stress. The study involved 306 nursing students and a survey questionnaire was employed to collect the data. The results of the study demonstrated that the main stressors were: 1) the quantity of work that need to be accomplished, 2) exams, dealing with emergency cases in clinical practice, 3) panic of making mistakes in the clinical area, 4)understanding and dealing with the theoretical course work, and 5) dealing with very ill patients. In addition, the results of the study revealed that the least factor that caused stress to students' nurses was interaction with the fellow students, academic staff, and patients.

In Australia, Thyer and Bazeley (1993) conducted a study to investigate the sources of stress for nursing students. They used a survey questionnaire to collect the data from 79 nursing students. The results of the study demonstrated that the sources of stress for student nurses were: 1) personal issues, 2) assignments, 3) study, 4) lecturers' time for consultation, and 5) coursework. In addition, the result of the study revealed that major source of stress was the load of assignments that are needed from students.

In the UK, Rhead (1995) conducted a study to explore the factors that cause stress to nursing students. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data from 55 certificate program students and 51 diploma program students. The results of the study showed that the factors that caused stress to the students were: 1) coping with the practical elements of the courses, 2) coping with the academic aspects of the courses, and 3) dealing with the death and suffering in the clinical area.

Another study in the UK was conducted by Lindop (1999) to explore the stress experience of 146 nursing students. The researcher used a survey questionnaire to collect the data. The results of the study indicated that students found some situation in nursing education were stressful to them. In addition, the results demonstrated that the stressors caused stresses to students during their academic learning were: 1) examinations, and 2) intense amount of work. Moreover, the results showed that the stressors caused stress to students during their clinical practices were: 1) culture shock (the ideal image of nursing was different from the real), 2) time pressure(difficulty of accomplishing the duties in the time

required), 3) unhelpful working nurses in varies wards, 4) unwilling to teach nursing students, 5) reprimand nursing students in the presents of staff and patients, 6) dealing with death and dying patients, 7) exhaustion . At the end of the study, Lindop (1999) suggested some methods to reduce stress factors for nursing students. These methods were: 1) the educational managers and staff of wards that are meant to teach students are responsible to increase the confidence of the students, and 2) changing the way of managing and dealing with students from hierarchy to supportive leadership.

In Nepal, a study was conducted by Mahat (1996) to explore the stressful events in the clinical sitting of the nursing students. The researcher used critical incident technique to collect the data from 104 nursing students. The results of the study demonstrated that the stressful events were: 1) the relationship between students and teachers, 2) clinical experiences, 3) and relationship between students and staff nurses.

From the above studies, it can be seen that the nursing students around the world are facing stress factors that affect their academic learning and clinical practices. However, all the above studies were conducted in the western countries. Therefore, there is a need for a study to be conducted in the Middle East to identify the stress factors that stress student nurses. So, an essential involvement can be done to prevent students from facing such stress factors, and to help the policy makers to call for a change. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to investigate Kuwaiti nursing students' perceptions regarding the factors that cause stress to the students during their study at the college.

Table 1 Summary of research studies and related factors

Authors Name	Year	Location	Academic stressors	Clinical stressors	Intrapersonal Stressors
Clarke and Ruffin	1992	USA	-The quantity of work that need to be accomplished - Exams	-Dealing with emergency cases in clinical practice	-Panic of making mistakes in the clinical area
Thyer and Bazeley	1993	Australia	-Assignments -Lectures time for consultation -Coursework		-Study -Personal issues
Rhead	1995	UK	-Coping with the academic aspects of the courses	-Coping with the practical elements of the courses -Dealing with the death and suffering in the clinical area	
Mahat	1996	Nepal		-Relationship between students and teachers -Clinical experiences -Relationship between students and staff nurses.	
Lindop	1999	UK	-Examinations - Intense amount of work	-Time pressure -Unhelpful working nurses in varies wards and unwilling to teach nursing students - Reprimand nursing students in the presents of staff and patients	- Culture shock - Exhaustion

IV. METHODOLOGY

The current study employed a quantitative approach using a questionnaire to collect the data from 57 Kuwaiti BSN nursing students who have already started their clinical training. The questionnaire was adopted from Timmins and Kaliszer (2002). The questioner consisted of two parts academic stressors and clinical stressors (see Table 2).

Students were asked to answer the questionnaire about the factors that may cause stress to student nurses. The questionnaire was a four Likert Scale ranging from: not at all stressful, moderately stressful, very stressful, and extremely stressful.

V. RESULTS

The results of the study seek to identify the factors that may cause stress to the nursing students. Table 2 represents the variables of stress and the mean score

The mean of theory, examinations, assignments, classroom house, and the death of patient was more than 3.5. This result indicates that these variables are extremely stressful for the nursing students. The mean of work load was 2.7 which indicate that this

variable is very stressful for nursing students. The mean of clinical placements, relationships with ward staff, relationships with nurse tutors, and relationships with clinical placement coordinator was more than 1.5. This result indicates that these variables are moderately stressful for the students.

Table 2 Distribution of percentage and mean responses to factors that may cause stress

No.	Stress Factors	Level of Stress- Percent Breakdown				Mean Score
		Not at all stressful	Moderately stressful	Very stressful	Extremely stressful	
1	Theory	1.8	24.6	35.1	38.6	3.79
2	Examinations	0	17.5	31.6	50.9	3.95
3	Assignments	10.5	29.8	24.6	35.1	3.75
4	Workload	8.8	35. 1	24.6	31.6	2.75
5	Classroom hours	3.5	24.6	33.3	38.6	3.78
6	Clinical placements	12.3	47.4	15.8	24.6	1.92
7	The death of a patient	1.8	17.5	26.3	54.4	3.98
8	Relationships with ward staff	28.1	31.6	19.3	21.1	1.71
9	Relationships with nurse tutors	31.6	41.2	5.3	21.1	1.87
10	Relationships with clinical placement coordinator	36.8	29.8	10.5	22.8	1.76

DISCUSSION

The results of the current study showed that the death of a patient was the highest extremely stressful factor that may cause stress for nursing students. This result is inconsistent with Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) who found in their study that the financial constrains was the highest extremely stressful factor that may cause stress to the students. In the current study the financial constrains was not involved in the study because the government of Kuwait is responsible for all financial issues and the study in local universities and colleges in Kuwait is for free.

The second highest extremely stressful factor was the examinations. This result is inconsistent with Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) who found in their study that the workload was the second highest extremely stressful factor that may cause stress to the students.

The third highest extremely stressful factor was the theory. This result is inconsistent with Timmins and Kaliszer (2002) who found in their study that the examinations was the third highest extremely stressful factor that may cause stress to the students.
In contrast, relationships with nurse tutors, relationships with clinical placement coordinator, and relationships with ward staff caused some degree of stress to the students. This result was consistent with Timmins and Kaliszer (2002).

Finally the result of the current study demonstrated that the academic factors were more stressful than the clinical factors to the nursing students. This result is consistent with Lindop (1999), Clarke and Ruffin (1992), Hamill (1995), and Rhead (1995) who also found the same result.
It can be seen from the results above what problems students face. Most of the problems are about the exams, work load, and assignments. To solve these problems, the college should provide assistants that can help students with their study, encourage students to create groups for discussion, and provide optional lectures to explain the clinical and academic assessments and how to deal with them.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research investigated the factors that may cause stress to the nursing students. The results demonstrated that the students faced some factors that may affect their academic and clinical performance. The highest factors that caused stress were the death of the patient, examination, and theory. These results showed that the academic issues stress students more than the clinical issues. Therefore, the college of nursing should take these issues into account and endeavor to overcome these stress factors. This study also recommends future researchers to investigate other factors that may affect student nurses, and examine the relationships between these factors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Author is grateful to the KFAS for supporting this research.

REFERENCES

[1] Clarke, V. A., & Ruffin, C. L. (1992). Perceived sources of stress among student nurses. *Contemporary Nurse*, *1*(1), 35-36.

[2] Hamill, C. (1995). The phenomenon of stress as perceived by Project 2000 student nurses: a case study. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *21*(3), 528-536.

[3] Lindop, E. (1999). A comparative study of stress between pre-and post-Project 2000 students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*,*29*(4), 967-973.

[4] Mahat, G. (1996). Stress and coping: first-year Nepalese nursing students in clinical settings. *Journal of Nursing Education*, *35*(4), 163-169.

[5] Rhead, M. M. (1995). Stress among student nurses: is it practical or academic?. *Journal of clinical nursing*, *4*(6), 369-376.

[6] Thyer, S., & Bazeley, P. (1993). Stressors to student nurses beginning tertiary education: an Australian study. *Nurse Education Today*, *13*(5), 336-342.

[7] Timmins, F., & Kaliszer, M. (2002). Aspects of nurse education programmes that frequently cause stress to nursing students–fact-finding sample survey. *Nurse Education Today*,*22*(3), 203-211.

★★★