

Perception and aspiration of final year B.Sc. nursing students towards their professional life

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Abstract

Background: Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare sector and are fundamental in the delivery of quality care. The perception and image of both nurses and nursing as a profession are vital in the successful recruitment and retention of staff in the health care industry.

Objective: To study the perception and aspirations of B.Sc. final year nursing students towards their professional life.

Material and Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted in Urban Health Care and training Center Shahaganj, Aurangabad. A total 70 B.Sc. final year nursing students were interviewed through self-administered questionnaire containing three major parts: the first part is the socio-demographic characteristics; the second part is perception of nursing profession; the third part is aspirations of nursing students.

Results: Approximately 80% of students' source of awareness was from nearly people, i.e., parents, relatives, and friends. And most (85%) of students were interested in their field. Most of the students choose this field mainly because of more job opportunities. The other significant reason to choose this field is their own interest in health care system and also their passion to serve the community. Majority (81.4%) of the students preferred the urban area while there was a small group (18.6%) of students even willing to work in the rural area. Majority of the students feel that both males and females are equally compassionate and dedicated to nursing profession. Maximum students want to be a doctor if they had opportunity but the majority of students (85.7%) were satisfied.

Conclusion: The perception of nursing profession among nursing students is changing towards positive side. The guidance by family and friends were important factors in joining nursing profession. Providing more career opportunities and projecting the nursing profession as a respectable and high demanding profession will help to boost admission and improve perceptions further.

KEY WORDS: Nursing, perception, aspiration, professional life

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Introduction

Nursing is a healthcare profession focused on the care of individuals, families, and communities. Nurses are the backbone of the healthcare sector and are fundamental in the delivery of quality care. The perception and image of both nurses and nursing as a profession are vital in the successful recruitment and retention of staff in the health care industry^[1].

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Although nurses form the largest professional group involved with health care delivery, there is a worldwide suffering from the shortage of nurses to meet the demand of health care setting. This shortage will influence the delivery of health care and negatively affecting patient outcomes. A World Health Organization International Council of Nurses discussion paper in 2009 estimated the global shortfall of nurses to have been close to 2 million in 2005 and projected it would rise to 2.8 million by 2015. The short fall is most acute in South East Asia, Africa, and the Eastern Mediterranean but exists in all regions (Canadian Federation of Nurses Union 2011)^[2].

Perception is the way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted. It is important to ascertain how students perceive nursing and the decision to choose nursing to be their career^[3]. With ongoing industrialization and urbanization in India, there is boom of multi-specialty hospitals and medical tourism. Beside these, a massive project of complete health care delivery system is being run throughout India under National Health Program (NHM) in both rural and urban area creating huge demand of nursing professionals and paramedical staff. There is also huge demand of qualified Indian nurses in Gulf and European countries. Contrary to these, nursing profession is not attractive for meritorious as well as other high school students; they do not see it as a good carrier option^[4].

In India, large number of nursing professional courses such as, B.Sc. Nursing, M.Sc. Nursing, Nursing Diploma, Associate of Science of Nursing, Nursing Credentials, and Certifications, are being taught throughout the country. Therefore the popularity and importance of this field is increasing day by day. B.Sc. Nursing is the most popular course and our aim is to know the perceptions of their profession and aspirations of their professional life in our setting. Additionally feelings towards their profession, main reasons for enrollment, and future prospective of nursing students were objectives of this study.

Material and Methods

Study Design

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was conducted to know the perception and aspiration of nursing students towards their professional life.

Study Area

Urban Health Care and Training Centre, Shahaganj, Aurangabad.

Sample Size and Sampling

A non-probability convenience sample was used in the present study. Total 70 B.Sc. nursing students posted in UHTC, Shahaganj were covered in the study.

Data Collection

All students were interviewed through self-administered questionnaire containing three major parts: **Part I:** This part included questions related to socio-demographic characteristics

of the study subjects such as sex, age, marital status, and parents' occupations. **Part II:** It is used to explore perception of nursing profession among nursing students. It contains reasons for enrollment to the faculty of nursing, awareness and interest of nursing students and why they chose nursing profession. **Part III:** This part included questions related to aspiration about nursing as a profession, and future prospective.

In parts II and III, students were instructed to tick the reasons (answers) for the given questions which they thought were true to their knowledge and feelings without any bias or any pressure. Identities of the participants were coded and confidentiality was strictly maintained.

Data Analysis

Data was entered in excel 2007 and percentages and Fisher Exact test statistics were calculated.

Results

Data were collected from total 70 nursing students. The demographic data (Table 1) of this study demonstrated that of the total 70 nursing students, majority (61.4%) were in 21–23 years of age followed by 18–20 years. Female nursing students were in majority (75.7%) compared to male students. And about 73% students were urban residential. The analysis of occupations of students' parents (Table 2) showed that

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of students

	No. (%)
Age	
18–20	19 (27.1)
21–23	43 (61.4)
23 and more	8 (11.5)
Gender	
Female	53 (75.7)
Male	17 (24.3)
Residence	
Urban	51 (72.9)
Rural	19 (27.1)
Occupation of father	
Farmer	25 (35.7)
Govt. servant	16 (22.9)
Teacher	10 (14.3)
Doctor	13 (18.6)
Other business	6 (8.5)
Occupation of mother	
Nurse	7 (10.0)
Teacher	5 (7.1)
Housewife	58 (82.9)

Table 2: Sources of awareness and guidance about nursing profession

Sources	Of awareness (N = 70), No. (%)	Of guidance (N = 70), No. (%)
Parents	31 (44.3)	40 (50.7)
Relatives	16 (22.9)	03 (4.3)
Friends	15 (21.4)	13 (18.6)
Media	05 (7.1)	01 (1.4)
Teachers	03 (4.3)	04 (5.7)
Self	–	09 (12.9)

Fisher Exact, $P > 0.05$.

35% of students' fathers were in agriculture sector as farmers. About 23% and 14% students replied that their fathers were in government service and teaching field, respectively. Only few (5.7%) students' fathers were doctor. Surprisingly most (83%) of the students' mothers were housewives and only about 10% were in nursing professional. The inquiry about source of awareness (Table 2) to the students about this profession yielded surprising results. Approximately 80% of students' source of awareness was from nearby people, i.e., parents, relatives, and friends; whereas only 1.4% and 5.7% students got aware from media and teachers respectively.

Similarly, majority of students answered that they have been guided by their parents and friends. Majority (85%) of the students were interested in their field whereas only 10% female students and 4% male students were not interested. A student had passion to serve in the community but only 19% were ready to work in rural area. Majority (70%) students believe both male and female are equally compassionate and dedicated to nursing profession in contrast to female dominant role in nursing profession. About 90% aspire to become doctor (Table 3). More than 70% students like about providing care and their passion to serve the community but about 50% fear about night duty and 18% about worst behavior of relatives and doctors (Tables 4 and 5).

Discussion

This cross-sectional study showed the positive perception and high level of aspirations of majority of nursing students towards their professional life. In this study 75% of the students were female students and majority of them from urban area. Majority of students were guided by their nearby people like parents, friends and relatives. More than 85% of students were interested as well as satisfied with their profession. This study reported that more than 80% nursing students recognize nursing as a caring profession and as an opportunity to serve the community to gain a better health. But around 50% feared of night duty and no weekly holidays.

These findings of caring profession and an opportunity to serve the community are comparable with the studies of Beck^[5] and O'Brien et al^[6]. Only 19% students fear of worst

Table 3: Students' own interest, satisfaction, and like to become doctor

Characteristics	Variables	Female (N = 53), No. (%)	Male (N = 17) No. (%)
Student's own interest	Interested	46 (65.7)	14 (20)
	Not interested	07 (10)	03 (4.3)
Satisfaction with course	Satisfied	45 (64.3)	15 (21.4)
	Not satisfied	08 (11.4)	02 (2.9)
Like to become doctor	Yes	48 (68.6)	15 (21.4)
	No	05 (7.1)	02 (2.9)

Fisher Exact, $P > 0.05$.

Table 4: Reasons and future perspectives for choosing nursing profession

Reasons and future perspectives for choosing nursing profession	Percent
More job opportunities available	30
Self interest in health care	21.4
Passion to serve community	20
Satisfying job	8.6
Due to parents same profession	8.6
Good income	5.7
No other better option available	2.9
Self-interest +parents same profession	1.4
Self-interest + serve community	1.4

behavior and disrespect which is much less than found in study of 1000 American nursing students by Buerhaus et al^[7]. Having a family member as nurse was less important motives for undertaking nursing in our study than the findings of Beck^[5], Rheaume et al^[8], and Larsen et al^[9]. Although source and guidance by parents, friends, and relatives had a positive influence on majority of nursing students' perceptions as also found in studies of Buerhaus et al^[7] and Williams et al^[10].

The students most frequently (70%) reported choosing nursing because of the availability of career opportunities, jobs security, salary, and interest in nursing in the present study which were similar to findings of Swarna^[9] and Williams et al^[10].

Limitation

Only one batch of students in the study was enrolled and scoring system for perception was not prepared. Hence generalized comparison to all nursing students is limited.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the final year nursing students generally have positive perceptions about the image of the nursing profession. The guidance by family and friends

Table 5: Students' most and least likes about nursing profession

What students like most about this field?	What students like least about this field?
1) Providing care to the patients – 47.1%	1) Night duty and no weekly holidays – 47.2%
2) Their passions to serve community – 21.4%	2) Worst behaviour of relatives and doctors – 18.6%
3) More job opportunity – 14.2%	3) No status in the society – 5.7%
4) Uniform of nurse or nursing staff – 5.7%	4) Public's dislike of the profession – 21.1%
5) Just to get employed – 5.7%	
6) Good salary – 5.7%	

are important factors in joining nursing profession. The highest percentage of students joined the nursing because of financial reasons/availability of work. Contrastingly only few students were willing to work in rural areas and additionally hectic work load along with fear of worst behavior of relatives and doctors are some of the impending factors in students' perspectives towards nursing profession. Providing more career opportunities and projecting the nursing profession as a respectable and high demanding profession will help to boost admission and improve perceptions further.

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