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The experiences of nursing students on their first clinical placement at local hospitals in Hong Kong

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Introduction

The clinical learning experience is an important part of nursing education to prepare student nurses to be registered nurses. However, many overseas studies showed that student nurses repeatedly reported on the negative experiences during working in the clinical setting particularly in the first clinical placement. In Hong Kong, three nursing schools under Hospital Authority have been reopening for training higher diploma nursing students since 2008 to solve the problem of manpower in local hospitals. No local research study has been done to interpret the experiences of nursing students on first clinical practice in Hong Kong.

Objectives

This study aimed to explore the first clinical experiences of nursing students in Hong Kong.

Methodology

The purposive sampling was employed. This study was a qualitative study of interpretive description (ID). The study was implied two sequential sources of data collection. The primary data source was a series of in-depth face-to-face individual interview of nursing students. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each of the participating using open-ended questions following an interview guide. The interviews were audio-taped recorded in the tutorial room at a nursing school or other agreed upon convenient location that is away from other disturbances.

Supplementary field notes were written after each interview. Each interview was lasted for about one to two hours. The taped interviews were transcribed verbatim within two weeks after the interviews. To ensure sufficient primary data was collected, recruitments of participants for interviews continue until achieving data saturation. Once the saturation was reached, three additional participants were recruited to verify the findings. There for, we were transcript the interviews within the two weeks, and to recognize the repetition in the data and to determine that the additions of new participants have not added any new information. The repetitive nature of data was the point at which researcher determine that saturation has been achieved. Two focus group interviews of nursing students were conducted as a

secondary data source in this inquiry. The first data collection source was culminated with focus group interviews. The purposes of the focus group interviews were to provide a further opportunity to evaluate and confirm the outcomes from primary data source of the inductive analysis and the provisional findings developed.

Result

Four themes summed up the first clinical experiences. They were “anxiety”, “self-awareness”, “frustration” and “clinical facilitation”. The finding indicated that the presences of mutual respect, appreciation and supports from clinical staff and mentors had a positive impact on the nursing students’ self-esteem. The acquisition of knowledge led to a decrease in anxiety levels and filled the gap between theory and practice.