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Empowerment Through Research: Bridging Academia and Society

A study on career perception of postgraduate students: Why is nursing my second choice?
-Nandini Das, Medha Verma, Euthan Newman

Introduction

- Nurses being one of the largest workforces in healthcare have carved their niche and made this amply clear that healthcare would go limp without their support.
- Although there is a recognition of the role that nurses play, there is evidence from the literature that there is a struggle to retain nurses.
- In 2023, burnout, exhaustion, and physical and mental health climbed up the list indicating that nurses continue to feel the pressure. Over half of the nurses left the register earlier than they planned (NMC, 2023a).

Background

- Between April 2022 and March 2023, there has been an 8.5% increase in the number of nurses joining the register (NMC, 2023b).
- To address the shortage, programs are being offered to allow non-nursing professionals to enter the profession at the postgraduate level.
- Professionals from a non-nursing background are open to pursuing nursing at the postgraduate level.
- In a US study, Factors for pursuing nursing as adult learners included family considerations, better financial considerations, better work schedule management, better image for their children and family members, higher social status for the future, and working as registered nurse positions as a long-term career (Santos, 2020).

Aim of the Study

- To explore the three interrelated aspects of career development of individuals who have opted for a nursing career at a post-graduate level.

The mentioned aspects include:

- Why did I think of a career change? (Self-Efficacy)
- What were the choices I had and why did I choose nursing? (Outcome expectations)
- What do I aim to achieve? (Personal goals)

Conclusion: The need to stem the tide of the well-documented scarcity in nursing requires a brave and inviting approach. Opening the MSc pathway up to individuals from previously different disciplines is a brave way of enticing mostly mature students into the profession. It can be

hypothesised that since these individuals have already tried out different careers, they are now more likely to settle into nursing based on their new-found motivations not the least of which is dissatisfaction with their previous roles.

The inherent nature to help people fuelled by the influence of family and friends paved the path into nursing albeit delayed due to lack of awareness and stereotypical beliefs about the profession.

P3: I wanted to get into nursing but was not sure of an entry point

P6: At the age of 18 or 19 I was possibly not mature enough to think about nursing as a profession.

P 2: People should choose nursing only if they have a passion for it.

P 7: Nurses working in the community resided with my family. I got my first glimpse of medical and healthcare terminologies by interacting with them.

P10: I want to maintain a work-life balance and I want to take it slowly. I do not want my job to kill me. interacting with them.

Methodology

- **Research Approach:** Qualitative research: Case study Approach
- **Sample:** First-year M.Sc. nursing students [whole cohort approached]
- **Number of students who participated-** 11 (no response from one student and one student refused)
- **Data collection method-** Semi-structured interview
- **Data Analysis-** Miles and Huberman (1994)- 4-step Case Study Thematic Analysis

Themes

1. **Views on nursing**
 - a. Lack of information
 - b. Lack of emotional maturity
2. **Motivation to get into nursing**
 - a. Inherent nature to help people
 - b. Financial prospects
3. **The move and road ahead**
 - a. Dissatisfaction in previous role
 - b. Work-life Balance
 - c. Field of specialisation

Discussion

Non-interest in nursing stemmed from fear of contact with ill people combined with a lack of awareness about career opportunities (Dante et al., 2013).

Encouragement from other health professionals and exposure to healthcare significantly impacted the choices made by the participants (Guy et al, 2022).

Work life Balance was a significant reporting. Financial betterment being one of the largest determinants of choosing nursing as a second career choice. (Santos, 2022).

However, in the current study, financial betterment was not equivocally aired by all. It was more of a reason stated by the male participants who had migrated to the UK just before COVID-19.

A great influencer of career choice has been peer pressure (Mtemeri, 2020). Most of the participants undoubtedly were influenced by peer pressure but given the choices they had combined with an intrinsic desire to help people which led to this choice of nursing.

References

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