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THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS AMONG SAUDI NEWLY-GRADUATED NURSES: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

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Statement of the Problem: Newly-qualified nurses perceive the transition into their new professional role as highly stressful, and they may not be well-equipped, or even ready, to acquire high-caliber skills such as speaking up against perceived unsafe practice. Developing assertive communication skills at an early stage of the nursing career was reported to be challenging. Undergraduate nursing education plays a vital role in preparing future nurses to work in complex and often stressful working environment. Saudi Arabia has unique socio-cultural and educational contexts, which may influence how health care professionals interact, communicate and manage their professional practice. Little research has examined the impact of undergraduate nursing education in shaping the development of speaking up attitudes against unsafe practice from Saudi newly-graduated nurses' perspectives. The purpose of this study was to examine the Saudi newly-graduated nurses' views on the contributions of undergraduate nursing program toward developing their assertive communication behaviors.

Methodology: This study is part of a larger project which involved cross-sectional survey of 83 newly -graduated Saudi nurses from five publically-funded hospitals in the Eastern Province, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. 45 nurses provided free text, qualitative

responses, which were then thematically analyzed. Findings: Four main themes emerged from the study: Theory-Practice Gap, Perceived Blurred Professional Boundaries, Perceived Level of Knowledge Vs Personality and Quality of Nursing Education.

Conclusion & Significance: Developing and nurturing assertive communication behaviors among Saudi undergraduate nursing students is the result of complex interplay of social, cultural, personal and educational factors. Nursing training is the cornerstone for empowering nursing students. There is a need to develop operational definition of assertive communication skills that can be taught and practiced both in clinical and university settings.

Biography

Mansour Mansour is an Associate Professor in Nursing, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia and has a research interest in patient safety and patient safety education. He was involved in an international project on testing and implementing the WHO Multi-professional Patient Safety Curriculum Guide. He is a Registered General Nurse and Registered Nurse Tutor at the Nursing and Midwifery Council, UK.

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