Peer Learning Intervention for Nursing Students

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Peer learning is a method by which professionals learn from each other. Different learning methodologies have been introduced that can enable professionals to improve their skills. Learning is a way that improves professional practice through reading, evaluating and analyzing information. Peer learning is a classical way that helps professionals improving their communication skills, evidence-based practice and knowledge particularly related to nursing. Healthcare is a profession that needs improvement and learning progressively. To evaluate the effectiveness of peer learning, research was conducted by Ylva Palsson and colleagues (Pålsson, Mårtensson, Swenne, Ädel, & Engström, 2017). Qualitative studies have been conducted so far however, an experimental study was not conducted. A quasi-experimental study design was selected to research peer learning interference for nursing scholars (Pålsson et al., 2017). The research was conducted to assess how peer learning can improve clinical practice as well as the learning skills of the nurses. The research significantly analyzed the importance of peer learning and its impact on nursing practice. Peer learning was used as an intervention to evaluate its effectiveness in training and educating nurses.

# Review of Literature

Nursing is a profession that faces the complex nature of diseases, case studies and all kinds of patients. Complex nature of cases require prompt and effective decisions to deliver quality services to the communities and societies. Healthcare settings have various departments including emergency, inpatient, outpatient, and medical wards. Emergency care units need an efficient and skilled workforce that can work under pressurized and heavy workload conditions. Peer learning was observed to be an effective way to teach and educate nurses to work under pressurized conditions. Nursing profession demands excellence and quality services that need continuous improvement and learning. Various studies have shown that learning with peers and preceptors can improve and enhance clinical practice. With the advent of new technologies, and emerging new diseases and disorders, communities and societies need an efficient workforce to deliver healthcare services.

A collaborative and cooperative environment is essentially important for healthcare providers to deliver effective and timely services to patients. Working in an environment that does not support cooperation would face consequences such as wrong administration of medication, poor medical records, and poor quality services. Peer learning methods can significantly teach nurses how to work in collaboration with staff to meet the needs and requirement s of quality services (Ravanipour, Bahreini, & Ravanipour, 2015). New graduates must be equipped with new skills, practical training, and evidence-based practice to effectively deliver healthcare services as it is essentially required to excel in the nursing profession (Ross, Bruderle, & Meakim, 2015).

Healthcare quality services and working environment is essentially important to be maintained. Effective and timely delivery of services can be improved with proper management and supervision. The peer learning method was observed to create better supervision approaches as working with preceptors is a way of teaching in which students learn by seeing and observing them. Observation and experimentation can enhance practice or nurses in the healthcare setting (Pålsson et al., 2017). To effectively reduce the burden of disease from communities and societies, effective management approaches and skills are essentially required to be implemented in healthcare settings to acquire good health.

# Methods

## Research Design

The study design selected for the research was quasi-experimental in which two groups were taken. One of the groups was the intervention group and one of the comparison groups. Nursing graduates were introduced with an intervention of peer learning in the last four weeks of their education. This was the intervention group. The other group selected continued their conventional learning methods. This was a comparison group.

## Sampling Method

Undergraduate students were invited to participate in research studying at a university in Sweden. The participants in the second semester of the 3-year program were attending practice at one of the three public sector hospitals. The number of participants was 87. The students were introduced with a complex set of patients with a diverse range of complications. Participants have different learning atmospheres such as staff, a variety of complicated cases and shift changes. The major course of nursing program is founded on practice. The registered nurses from the healthcare setting played their role as preceptors to help and assist students in learning. One of the groups was an intervention group that was given intervention of peer learning whereas the other group was the comparison group having traditional methods of learning. The variables of the study were age, experience, demographic variations, time and learning skills. Other variables self-efficacy, learning, critical thinking, and support were also observed.

## Date Collection

Follow-up data and baseline with the help of questionnaire was collected in March and February 2014 respectively. During the second of practical training baseline data was gathered after traditional supervision. After two weeks of baseline, follow-up data were collected (Pålsson et al., 2017). The questionnaire was developed to the information and data. Students were allowed to answer the questionnaire online or at home. Students filling their questionnaires on site were asked to fill it and after that, an envelope was provided to place the questionnaire in a box. Students filling the questionnaires at homes were requested to fill it and after that courier it to the same author (Pålsson et al., 2017). Questionnaires were developed using nine instruments, eight from the primary outcomes and one from the secondary outcome. It took 30 to 40 minutes for students to fill the questionnaire (Pålsson et al., 2017).

# Results and Discussion

## Data Analysis

Statistical analysis using IBM SPSS statistics was utilized for the study. Mann-Whitney *U* test and Chi2 were performed. Non-parametric statistics, Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to analyze the variations within time and between groups (Pålsson et al., 2017). As the factors used were not normal distribution therefore nonstatistical analysis was applied.

## Results

Participants' average age was 25 years and the number of participants was 70. Females in the study sample had no higher education (Pålsson et al., 2017). Most of the study population was consisting of females that are 96% (Pålsson et al., 2017). Those had already worked before nursing education was around 54% (Pålsson et al., 2017). There were no differences between participants and non-responders at baseline regarding any of the study variables or demographic characteristics. Additionally, there were no alterations among the intervention and comparison collections at baseline concerning demographic features (Pålsson et al., 2017). Though, the interference group had poorer self-ratings on cooperative behavior (*p* = 0.008), emotional empowerment concerning the element meaning (*p* = 0.030), self-efficacy concerning both the NSE (*p* = 0.033) and the single-item query ‘feeling prepared to cope with work as a nurse’ (*p* = 0.015) at baseline matched to the comparison group (Pålsson et al., 2017).

**Discussion**

The impact of peer learning was observed to be positive in nursing practice. The study evaluated that peer learning enhanced nursing capacity to learn and improve their skills. The research showed that peer learning and working with preceptors was an excellent experience for nurses' graduates as it improved their perceived elf-efficacy (Pålsson et al., 2017). To work and cope with work was also a significant element discussed in the paper (Ravanipour et al., 2015). The major four areas were significantly analyzed including self-efficacy, personal experience, the achievement of tasks or goals, and learning while working with other nurses.

Peer learning was identified in improving the self-efficacy of nurses and the results of the study were similar to studies conducted previously (Ross et al., 2015). Learning by monitoring and working with peers is associated to improve learning skills. Nursing is a profession that required continuous support and leaning. Learning is a method that can improve skills particularly practice (Pålsson et al., 2017). Peer learning has been observed as an effective intervention for graduate nurses to improve their practical skills. The intervention group significantly showed higher levels of self-efficacy and self-determination skills (Pålsson et al., 2017). Nurses responded that peer learning was found to be essentially improving their professional capacity.

## Recommendations

Professionalism, practical training, and improved self-efficacy were significantly improved in the intervention group. Critical thinking, evidence-based learning, and professional practice were significantly improved in the intervention group however, the comparison group was not able to improve these skills through traditional learning and supervision (Pålsson et al., 2017). Psychological factors and empowerment of nurses were also improved in the intervention group. These indicators showed that peer learning is a way of learning that can significantly improve learning abilities and practical training of nurses.

Peer learning should be adapted in all nursing courses to improve their skills in practice. Healthcare setting with the complex nature of conditions and circumstances need nurses and healthcare providers that have improved skills of professionalism, evidence-based practice and decision making (Pålsson et al., 2017). Peer learning has improved self-determination in nurses. It indicates that the nurses would be able to decide according to the circumstances. Peer learning has been associated with competence and impact. The impact is a state by which one can influence results, strategic planning, and administration (Ravanipour et al., 2015). The nurse who performed well in administration, management, and treatment is better to adapt and practice in the field. Collaboration and teamwork are also associated with healthcare practice (Ravanipour et al., 2015). Nurses are required to work in collaboration to effectively deliver services related to quality healthcare.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

Peer learning intervention was significantly assessed in nurses' students and it was identified that a collaborative and cooperative environment is essentially imperative for the healthcare workers to deliver effective and timely services to the patients. The results of the study showed that peer learning is an effective way to educate and train nurses. This method can significantly improve the skills of professional training in the nursing field (Pålsson et al., 2017). The study identified that working in an environment that does not have cooperation would face serious consequences therefore, the peer learning method can meaningfully teach nurses how to work in teamwork with staff to meet the essentials and requirement s of quality services (Ravanipour et al., 2015). Nurses must be equipped with new skills, practical training, and evidence-based practice to effectively deliver healthcare services as they are directly involved in delivering services to patients and communities.

It is essentially required to excel and improve their training and practice in the nursing profession so that they can meet the requirements and standard of delivery of healthcare services and it is achievable with peer learning (Ross et al., 2015). The study effectively evaluated the significance of peer learning in nursing practice however, certain weaknesses were also observed in the study (Pålsson et al., 2017). The study sample size was small that can limit the study to generalize the results to the overall population. It was observed that study participants on a large scale can significantly identify other related factors that can affect learning.

# Significance to Nursing

Nursing students can improve their practice through peer learning methods. Self-efficacy and self-determination can be significantly improved with peer learning. Peer learning can improve the professional practice of healthcare providers to deliver effective and timely services to patients. Evidence-based practice and professional training with the help of peers can significantly enhance the capabilities of nurses (Ravanipour et al., 2015). Traditional supervision does not support the learning environment for nurses whereas nursing practice can be enhanced using peer learning. With the advancement in recent years, learning methodologies should be changed and upgraded to new methods that can improve the skills and professionalism of nurses (Pålsson et al., 2017). New researches and methodologies should be implemented in nursing education to train and equip nurses with maximum characteristics to deal and practice all kinds of circumstances in future practice. Nursing courses and curriculum is consisting of practice (Ross et al., 2015). Practical training is a major part of the nursing graduation course and this part of nurses can be significantly improved by applying peer learning methods (Ravanipour et al., 2015). Nurses who are trained through peer learning have been observed well in delivering good medical health services to communities. Nurses participated in peer learning have been evaluated to have improved skills in the identification and diagnosis of diseases. To decrease disease burden from communities, an efficient workforce is required to deliver effective healthcare services with evidence-based practice. To achieve the required results, peer learning is suggested to be implemented in nursing practical training to improve their skills, practice, and professionalism.

**References**

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