

Importance of Nursing Theories as a Basis for Practice

**Leenah S. Iskandarani, BSN, Aljhora M. Al Hammadi, BSN
and Rehab A. Al Gizani, BSN**

*College of Nursing
King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
leenataki@hotmail.com*

Abstract. A nursing theory is a set of concepts and principles that define the scientific basis of nursing profession. Nursing theories enhance students' understanding of the principles, values, and meanings of nursing profession. In addition, it helps nurses to understand their role in the healthcare setting.. Assess the knowledge of the nursing staff and students at King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Hospital and King Saud bin Abdulaziz University in Riyadh regarding nursing theories. A cross-sectional design was used to collect data from 25 Saudi nursing students, and 25 multi- nationality nursing staff. 48% of the staff believed nursing theories must be linked to the practice settings, while 56% did not know which theories their workplace drew on during care delivery. Moreover, 60% of the students did not know which theoretical model is adopted by their school. Similarly, 40% of the students did not know the importance of linking the theories to practice settings. Lack of theoretical knowledge was found among the participants. To advance the nursing profession it is necessary that hospitals and nursing schools follow a theoretical model, and link theories to practice. A further study with larger sample size might need to be conducted.

Keywords: Nursing, Theory, Riyadh.

Introduction

To be able to explain an idea, thought, or hypothesis one needs a theory. "Theory" is defined as: "A system of rules, procedures, and assumptions

Correspondence & reprint request to: Ms. Leenah S. Iskandarani
P.O. Box 28588, Riyadh 11447, Saudi Arabia

Accepted for publication: 17 August 2011. Received: 04 June 2011.

used to produce a result^[1]. Theories provide the basic knowledge for all professions. In nursing, theories set the foundation of nursing knowledge, and define the scientific basis of the nursing profession^[2]. Nursing theories enhance students' understanding of principles, values, and the meaning of nursing practice. A strong theoretical background is needed to guide nurses to improve their care delivery, direct critical thinking and decision making^[2]. Providing a definition of nursing theory helps nurses to understand their role in the healthcare settings^[3]. These theories help nurses to determine the need and the goals of their profession, thus advancing their care delivery. It also supports nurses in the scope of caring for the clients holistically in assessing, planning and implementing professionally. Many studies have proved the importance of linking nursing theories to the clinical practice in order to achieve high quality of care^[2,4]. Raudonis and Acton (1997) stated that following a theoretical perspective allows nurses to perform care purposefully and proactively^[2]. Moreover, Maginnis and Croxon (2010) have recently reported the need to apply the lectures of nursing theories to the practice settings^[4]. However, the number of studies that emphasized the importance and the effectiveness of nursing theories in the clinical practice were limited. Therefore, it has led to the belief that nursing theories are irrelevant to practice^[5]. Furthermore, Daley (1996) studied the linkage made between theoretical material and clinical nursing practice, and found that there is a theory- practice gap^[6].

Objectives

The purpose of this research is to discuss the importance of applying the nursing theories in the practice settings. It also aims to assess the knowledge of the nursing staff and students at King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Hospital and King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences in Riyadh regarding nursing theories.

Materials and Methods

Research Question

The main purpose of this study is to find the answer to the following question: What is the level of knowledge of the nursing theories the staff at King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Hospital and students at King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences in Riyadh have.

Design and Sample

A cross sectional design was used to collect data from twenty five Saudi nursing students who are studying at King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences in Riyadh. The selection process included nursing students that had studied the *Introduction to the Discipline of Nursing* course. In addition, twenty-five multi-nationality nursing staff who are working at King Fahad bin Abdulaziz Hospital, the university hospital, was included in the study.

Instrument

All participants responded to a structured questionnaire having nine multiple choice questions related to the establishment of nursing profession, and some of the most common nursing theories. Similarly, they were given the chance to express their personal opinion about the importance of the nursing theories. The tool was designed by the researchers.

Data Analysis

A descriptive statistics data analyses was carried out to analyze the data using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 15.0.

Results

More than half of the staff sample (56%) did not know the nursing model on their current workplace; that hospital drew on during care delivery. Similarly, sixty percent of students did not know what theoretical model was adopted by their school. In addition, the majority of the sample did not have a specific role model to follow in their nursing practice (Table 1).

Forty-eight percent of the staff believed that nursing theories must be linked to the practice settings. On the other hand, forty percent of the students sample did not know the importance of linking the theories to practices setting (Fig. 1).

Moreover, although the majority of the staff and students were aware of the establishment of nursing profession and theories, they did not know what was the most famous theorists (Tables 2 and 3).

Table 1. The nursing staff and students' awareness of the nursing theories used by their school and workplace.

Questions	Staff		Students	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<i>As a nursing student, what theory/model/framework dose/did your school follow?</i>				
1. Jean Watson	6	24.0	8	32.0
2. Patricia banner	1	4.0	2	8.0
3. Hildegard Peplau	1	4.0	0	0
4. Others	1	4.0	0	0
5. I don't know	16	64.0	15	60.0
<i>What nursing theory/model or framework do your current workplace and hospital in general draw for care delivery?</i>				
1. Jean Watson	2	8.0	5	20.0
2. Patricia Banner	3	12.0	1	4.0
3. Martha Rogers	5	20.0	5	20.0
4. Others	1	4.0	0	0
5. I don't know	14	56.0	14	56.0
<i>Your role model of nursing theorist is:</i>				
1. Martha Roger	3	12.0	2	8.0
2. Dortha Orem	5	20.0	0	0.0
3. I don't have	15	60.0	20	80.0
4. Others	2	8.0	3	12.0

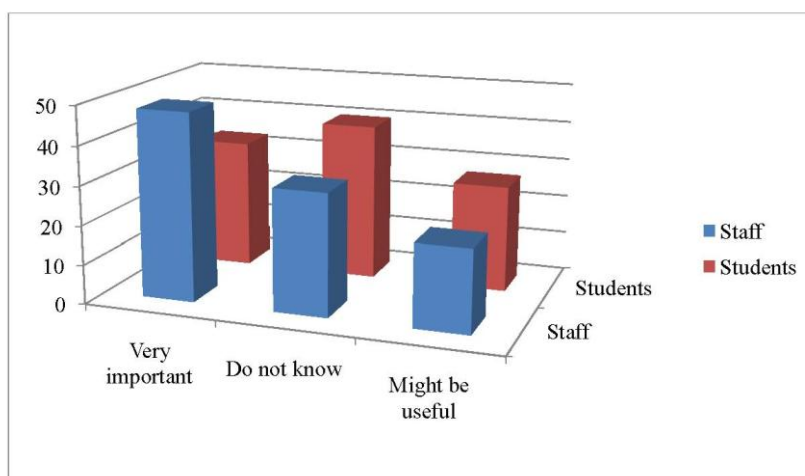
**Fig. 1.** The figure shows the sample's opinion about integration of nursing theories into practice setting.

Table 2. The staff and students' knowledge about the establishment of the nursing profession.

Questions	Staff		Students	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<i>Who established nursing profession internationally?</i>				
1. Rofaidah Alaslmiah	2	8.0	2	8.0
2. Florance Nightingale	22	88.0	22	88.0
3. Dortha Orem	0	0.0	1	4.0
4. Zainab Alhelaya	1	4.0	0	0
<i>Who established nursing profession in Islamic countries?</i>				
1. Rofaidah Alaslmiah	13	52.0	13	52.0
2. Florance Nightingale	3	12.0	1	4.0
3. Dortha Orem	4	16.0	1	4.0
4. Sabah Abu zanadh	5	20.0	6	24.0
5. I don't know	0	0.0	4	16.0

Table 3. The table shows the staff and students' awareness about some of the famous nursing theorists.

Questions	Staff		Students	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<i>What was the name of the theorist who stated that nursing is both science and art?</i>				
1. Martha Roger	14	56.0	8	32.0
2. Muneerah Alosaimi	1	4.0	0	0.0
3. Aishah Bint Abu Bakr	3	12.0	7	28.0
4. Chin & Kramer	2	8.0	2	8.0
5. I don't know	5	20.0	8	32.0
<i>What did Hildegard Peplau discuss in her theory?</i>				
1. Health care dynamics with patient's care	2	8.0	4	16.0
2. Therapeutic relationship between nurses and clients	13	52.0	2	8.0
3. Social relationship	2	8.0	2	8.0
4. Personal relationship with health care members	2	8.0	5	20.0
5. I don't know	6	24.0	12	48.0

Half of the staff sample (52%) and sixty-four percent of the students believed that King Fahad bin Abdullaziz Hospital provided them with time and resources to practice nursing with structured care delivery. Thus, forty-eight percent of the staff and 36% of the students did not think so (Fig. 2).

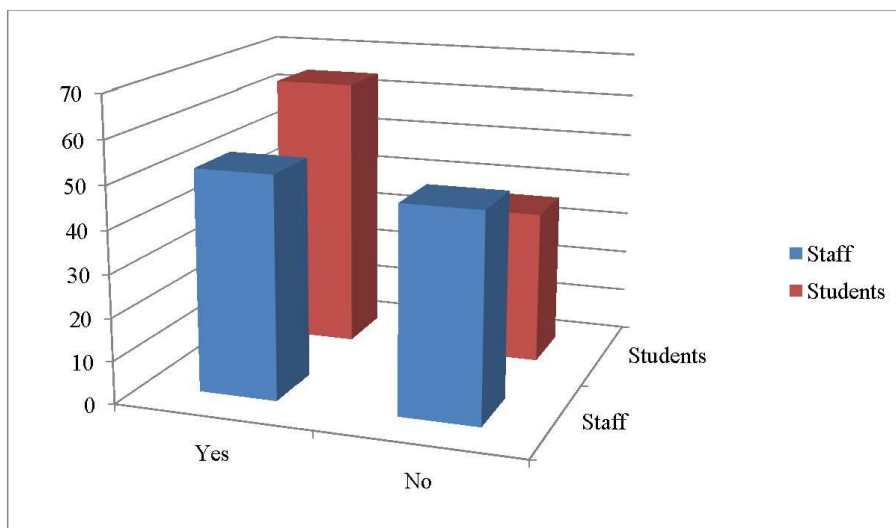


Fig. 2. The figure shows the staff and students' opinion concerning whether the King Fahad bin Abdullaziz Hospital provided them with time and resources to practice a structured care delivery.

Discussion

The study investigated the theoretical knowledge of the nursing staff and students. It was found that there was a lack of knowledge on the participants. This indicates the need for more application of theories in the nursing programs and practice. The study findings could not be compared with other findings due to the limitation of researches done for the same aim. Moreover, some of the nurses believed that they could practice nursing profession without basing it on any theoretical background. This result is supported by other research findings which show a theory-practice gap. Regarding nursing students, the majority did not have the knowledge about nursing theories and their importance. That indicates the need for more nursing courses covering nursing theories.

Conclusion

Both nursing staff and students agreed that the nursing theories are important and must be applied in nursing practice. To advance the nursing profession it is necessary that hospitals and nursing schools follow a specific theoretical model, and encourage their staff and students to apply it in their clinical practice. Nursing theories courses for undergraduate students might need to be emphasized. A further study with a larger sample size might need to be conducted, as the sample size of the current study was small. The study findings could not be generalized, although it has similar findings with other studies.

References

- [1] "theory." *Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged* 10th ed. Harper Collins P. 22 May. 2011. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/theory>>.
- [2] **Raudonis M, Acton J.** Theory-based nursing practice. *J Adv Nurs* 1997; **26**(1): 138-145.
- [3] **Colley S.** Nursing theory: its importance to practice. *Nurs Stand* 2003; **17**(46): 33-37.
- [4] **Maginnis C, Croxon L.** Transfer of learning to the nursing clinical practice setting. *Rural Remote Health* 2010; **10**(2): 1313.
- [5] **Mawdsley S.** Nursing theories and their relevance to contemporary infection control practice. *J Infect Prev* 2005; **6**(3): 26-29.
- [6] **Daley B.** Concept maps: linking nursing theory to clinical nursing practice. *J Contin Educ Nurs* 1996; **27**(1): 17-27.

أهمية النظريات التمريضية كأساس للتدريب

لينه سهيل اسكندراني (الباحث المساعد)، والجوهرة محمد الحمادي،

ورحاب أحمد الجيزاني

قسم التمريض، كلية التمريض

جامعه الملك سعود بن عبد العزيز للعلوم الصحية

الرياض - المملكة العربية السعودية

المستخلص. النظريات التمريضية هي مجموعة من المفاهيم والمبادئ التي تحدد القاعدة العلمية لمهنة التمريض. نظريات التمريض تعزز فهم الطلبة للمبادئ والقيم ومعنى مهنة التمريض. بالإضافة، تساعد الكادر التمريضي على فهم دوره في مجالات تقديم الرعاية الصحية. الأهداف: تقييم مستوى معرفة الكادر التمريضي في مستشفى الملك فهد بن عبدالعزيز وطالبات التمريض في جامعة الملك سعود بن عبدالعزيز للعلوم الصحية في الرياض بنظريات التمريض. المنهجية: شمل البحث دراسة مقطعية لجميع البيانات من ٢٥ طالبة تمريض سعودية و ٢٥ ممرضة من كادر متعدد الجنسيات. النتائج: يعتقد ٤٨٪ من الكادر التمريضي أنه يجب ربط النظريات التمريضية بالممارسة. في حين لم يعلم ٥٦٪ منهم ماهي النظريات التمريضية التي تتبعها أماكن عملهم. ٦٠٪ من الطالبات لم يعلمن ما هو النموذج النظري المتبع في كليتهم. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، ٤٠٪ منهن لم يعلمن ما هي أهمية ربط النظريات التمريضية بممارسة الرعاية. الاستنتاج: تبين الافتقار إلى المعرفة النظرية بين المشاركين. إنه من الضروري للمستشفيات وكليات التمريض اتباع نموذج نظري وربط

النظريات بالممارسة التمريضية من أجل التقدم بالمهنة. قد تكون هناك حاجة لإجراء دراسة أخرى باستخدام حجم عينة أكبر.