

Research progress on humanistic care ability and influencing factors of intern nursing students

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Abstract. – This paper is dedicated to reviewing relative research on humanistic caring ability of intern nursing students and proposing strategies to improve humanistic caring ability.

Firstly, current paper collected information from both domestic and foreign literature, and then scientific analysis, summary and overview of research results were conducted with regards to humanistic caring ability of intern nursing students. By analyzing the current situation of intern nursing students' humanistic caring ability, and factors that have influence on humanistic caring ability of intern nursing students, the present paper is determined to come up with feasible change methods and form strategic paths.

At present, the humanistic care ability of intern nursing students is relatively low. Students, schools, hospitals, and the society all exert influence on the humanistic care ability of intern nursing students. Although scholars' research is different in topics or focus, the conclusions drawn from this research are highly consistent.

Nursing humanistic care is the internal quality of nursing staff concerning morality, humanity, and integration of knowledge, concepts, and attitudes. Nursing humanistic care ability includes caring experience ability and caring behavior ability. The necessary psychological characteristics of personality are regarded as a special ability. It is of great significance to promote the quality of nursing and humanistic care ability of intern nursing students who serve as the backup force of nursing talent team. Meanwhile, it is imperative to strengthen the construction of intern nursing students' humanistic care ability.

Key Words:

Intern nursing students, Humanistic care, Ability, Influencing factors.

Introduction

Nursing humanistic care is an interpersonal activity requiring both nurses and patients to work together so that nursing ability may be elevated to deal with illness and stress; thus, patients' health can be enhanced¹. At present, with the continuous changes of the bio-psycho-social medical model, clinical patients have an increasing demand in spiritual aspects including being respected and cared for. Therefore, so humanistic nursing has gradually become an unstoppable trend. Nursing students, working as backup force of nursing workers, have attracted increasing attention to their humanistic care ability, which has become an important part of clinical humanistic nursing. It is an inevitable trend and requirement to combine modern nursing and humanistic nursing to build a harmonious nurse-patient relationship, which also integrates the development of nurses. Interns' humanistic caring skills are attributed to various factors such as gender, grade, student origin, social practice, school caring environment, students' own quality, and emotional intelligence, to name a few. Medical students are the future medical students regardless of medical treatment to nursing. The future social medical level is subjected to the influence of important reserve force in the field, leaving it awfully crucial to strengthen the caring ability of medical students². This paper reviews the current situation and influencing factors of the humanistic caring ability of Chinese intern nursing students. It also puts forward suggestions to increase humanistic caring ability of intern nursing students.

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ing students, and illustrates possible influencing factors explicitly, in hope to shed light on the cultivation of the humanistic caring ability of intern nursing students.

Definition of Human Care

To gain a full understanding of humanistic care ability, it is necessary to know the concept of humanistic care first. Nowadays, no unified concept of humanistic care is agreed, yet scholars all consider humanistic care as the core and essence of nursing. In the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of nursing humanistic care was formally proposed. In "Human Caring Science: A Theory of Nursing"³, Watson expounded the concept of nursing humanistic care in which nursing humanistic care is described as a kind of awareness, willingness or responsibility to actively care for people, and it is an attitude and value reflected in specific actions. It is defined by theorist Leininger⁴ that nursing humanistic care refers to professional behaviors or activities that nurses adopt to provide care that is beneficial to the patients and families with unique cultural background, assist, support and satisfy the demands of different individuals or groups, making it possible to upregulate their living conditions, health conditions or life quality. Meanwhile, some scholars believe that nursing humanistic care is sympathetic understanding of patients, respect and care for life, as well as emotional contribution of nurses to patients from the bottom of heart after internalizing learned knowledge. There are also scholars regard nursing humanistic care as the sincere care for the health and life, personality and dignity, power and needs of patients, which is cultivated by nursing staff in a humane spirit.

Assessment Tool for Nursing Students' Humanistic Care Ability

The evaluation tool for the humanistic caring ability of nursing students is the Caring Ability Inventory (CAI) developed by Professor Nkongho⁵ in 1990, including three dimensions: cognitive dimension, courage dimension, and patience dimension, with 37 items in total. The total score of 37-259 points was obtained using Likert 7-level scoring method. The recommended CAI norm was as follows: over 220.30 points meant high caring ability, 203.10-220.30 points represented

medium caring ability, and less than 203.10 points exhibited low caring ability. Later, Chinese scholars Zhou et al⁶ and Xu et al⁷ conducted experiments to measure the humanistic care ability of undergraduate nursing students and nursing staff respectively applying the sinicization of the CAI. The reliability of the scale after sinicization exceeded 0.8 and the internal consistency turned out to be good. Coates⁸ developed the Caring Efficacy Scale (CES) in 1997, including three dimensions: environmental dimension, biological dimension and cognitive dimension. There were 30 items with 23 positive items and 7 A reverse entry. Cronbach's coefficient was 0.92 with the employment of Likert 6-level scoring method, and the internal consistency proved good. The Caring Assessment Tool (CAT) developed by Duffy et al⁹ in 2007 contains 36 items in 8 dimensions. With the application of Likert 5-level scoring method, it was found that the scoring range was 36-180 points, and the reliability was 0.977. In 2010, Duffy et al¹⁰ revised it into a single dimension with 27 items in total, ranging from 27 points to 135 points with a reliability of 0.967 and a high internal consistency. In 2007, humanistic care ability scale for nursing students was further developed by Chinese scholar Huang¹⁰. It contains 45 items and 8 dimensions, namely instilling belief and hope, health education, forming humane and altruistic values, scientifically solving health problems, assisting in meeting basic needs, providing a good environment, facilitating emotional communication, and helping solve difficulties. The total score of 180 points was gained using Likert 5-level scoring method. Cronbach's coefficient was 0.904, and the validity was 0.960. At present, CAI (multi-measurement of nursing students in school) and Huang¹¹ humanistic care ability scale of nursing students (multi-measurement of intern nursing students) are widely used most.

Research Status of Nursing Students' Humanistic Care Ability

To fully understand humanistic care ability, it is critical to gain knowledge of humanistic care. At present, concept of humanistic care has not been agreed, but scholars firmly believe that humanistic care is the core and essence of nursing. Leninger⁴ believes that nursing humanistic care refers to manner of professional sexual conduct or activity that nurses adopt to provide care that is conducive to the patients and families with unique cultural

background, assist, support and satisfy the requirements of different individuals or groups, leaving it possible to improve their living conditions, health conditions or prolong life. What is firmly believed by some scholars is that nursing humanistic care indicates sympathy and understanding of patients, respect and care for life¹², and more importantly, the emotional contribution provided for patients by nurses after having a complete absorption of what they have learned. Some scholars believe that nursing humanistic care refers to the sincere care given by nursing staff to the patient's health and life, personality and dignity, power and needs in a humane spirit. Huang¹¹ considered nursing humanistic care as the practical ability of nursing staff to uphold morality, human nature, and to integrate knowledge, concepts, and attitudes into a conscious and creative practical work to better serve patients¹³. Nursing humanistic caring ability includes caring experience ability and caring behavior ability, a special ability and a necessary psychological characteristic for nursing staff to successfully complete the activities of serving patients. Studies conducted by most scholars exhibit that the overall level of Chinese nursing students' humanistic care ability is quite low, which is even lower than that of foreign students in related research. For instance, it is shown in Ma et al¹⁴ that the CAI score of undergraduate nursing students' humanistic care ability is between 84 and 232 points, with an average of 174.67 points¹⁴. The average score for third- and fourth-year nursing undergraduates is 208 points in some study¹⁵. Therefore, it is suggested that nursing educators and managers put more emphasis on the improvement of nursing students' humanistic care ability and cultivate high-quality talents with humanistic literacy for the nursing cause of the motherland.

Influencing Factors of Nursing Students' Humanistic Care Ability

Nursing Students

Social background

According to the research, it is found that gender, education, grade, ethnicity, personality, and home address have an impact on nursing students' humanistic care ability, but the outcomes are different. Results obtained from this research show that the nursing students at junior college, second grade and extroverted personality have higher humanistic caring ability, while gender and family

location exert no significant effect on humanistic caring ability. It has been discovered in other research that female nursing students, junior college students, senior students, and rural nursing students have a stronger humanistic care ability. In contrast, the result that undergraduate nursing interns have strong caring abilities^{16,17} was also gained. Multiple reasons account for the different results, including different scales used in research, different amount of nursing students involved, different samples of nursing students surveyed in different studies. Therefore, more in-depth research is needed to investigate the correlation between social background and nursing students' humanistic care ability, hoping to provide more precise guidance for the development of humanistic education.

Professional identity

Antonini et al¹⁸ research found that professional identity affects caring ability of nursing students, which are positively correlated. They also found that professional identity affects nursing students' caring ability according to the interviews conducted with clinical teachers. Nursing students have considered their professions as the powerful beacons to their lives with great passion and enthusiasm, thus they are willing to fully dedicate themselves into their studies with more time and energy. In this way, they can actively apply their expertise into practice and pay more concentration on their work with high efficiency. Consequently, they were able to handle negative phenomena that occurred in the occupation with a peaceful mind, recognize their own value, and better understand and take care of patients¹⁹, which was manifested as a stronger humanistic care ability. However, the effect of professional identity on nursing students' caring ability remains to be further investigated.

Interpersonal communication skills

It was found that interpersonal communication skills and caring skills were closely related based on the interviews with some teachers. Clinical practice nursing students generally had poor interpersonal communication skills, which exert negative effect on the cultivation of humanistic caring skills. Interpersonal communication ability will have a direct impact on caring ability, which was in line with the results obtained from Zhao et al²⁰ research when taking the tense nurse-patient relationship into consideration, good coordination and communication skills are the prerequisites for building trust with patients. It is easier and quick-

er for a nursing student who can flexibly apply communication skills to gain a heartfelt trust of patients, which cannot only reduce the sense of distance between nurses and patients, but also create a more harmonious relationship between nurses and patients, and finally improve the nursing ability of nursing students. Active caring for patients gives rise to a virtuous circle.

Teaching aspects

Teachers' lack of humanistic concepts, teaching content, and curriculum settings are important influencing factors. Research suggested that in the course of teaching, imparting professional knowledge and skills took up the most time, leaving little room for humanities courses²¹. Additionally, scholars²² found that teaching forms and methods were important factors deserving special attention. It was affirmed that group activities, situational teaching and other methods had influence on cultivating nursing students' caring ability. Our research demonstrates that the nursing competency of nursing students has strengthened due to the practice and training they received in the classroom and hospital. These places can create perfect learning atmosphere for nursing students to gain knowledge and receive guidance to improve their nursing abilities from those professional nursing teachers and the other useful teaching resources. Teachers' knowledge and literacy subtly affect students in all aspects²³. Therefore, the educational forms of schools and hospitals, as well as the humanistic quality of teachers are important factors.

Social Aspects

Shortage in social resources, such as few practice bases of humanistic care, lack of humanistic atmosphere in medical institutions, and deficiency of patient trust in social transition period²⁴, will affect the practice of nursing students' humanistic care ability. It was indicated in the interviews that patient distrust was a serious problem, not only creating a rigid relationship between nurses and patients but also leaving it difficult for nursing student to provide care. More practice is needed to consolidate theoretical knowledge. When the learned theory falls short in practice, the nursing students' caring ability cannot be fully practiced and improved. It is recommended that the concerned social departments attach importance to the publicity of good nurse-patient relationship and take advantage of the opportunity to make people aware the correct nurse-patient relation-

ship and lay a psychological foundation for cultivating a good nurse-patient relationship, thereby promoting the effective improvement of the humanistic care ability of nursing students.

People Around You Care

Wang et al²⁵ pointed out that whether nursing students felt the care from family, friends, and teachers or not made a difference in their humanistic care ability, which was consistent with the previous results obtained from our research group. Humanistic care is a two-way process. Only in a caring environment can nursing students receive more care and love education, know how to show love to others, and thus be more likely to care for others.

Correlation Study on the Humanistic Care Ability of Nursing Students

At present, extensive and comprehensive research on the correlation of humanistic care ability of nursing students has been conducted with focus on teacher factors, educational environment, professional attitude, psychological status and social relations. In view of correlation with teachers, studies^{17-19,22} showed that nursing students' humanistic caring ability is closely connected with perceived caring behavior of clinical nursing teachers and the humanistic quality of nursing teachers. Nursing students perceive that higher caring degree and higher humanistic quality of clinical nursing teachers contribute to their higher humanistic caring ability. When it comes to connecting with educational environment, researchers exhibited that classroom atmosphere, educational environment, school care environment, and clinical learning environment were closely related to nursing students' humanistic care ability^{8,17,21}. The better the classroom atmosphere, the better educational environment, the higher evaluation of caring school environment and clinical learning environment of nursing students, the higher nursing students' humanistic caring ability. Regarding the effect of professional attitudes, it was demonstrated in this study that nursing students' professional thinking, professional identity, professional self-concept and humanistic care ability were closely related^{18,19}. A stable professional thought and a higher and stronger professional self-concept in professional identity made contributions to a higher humanistic care ability. Taking into account the connection with psychological status,

it was found in this study that nursing students' empathy, resilience, adaptation, emotional intelligence, and humanistic care ability were closely related²⁰. The higher emotional intelligence, the higher humanistic caring ability.

Implications for Future Research

Strengthen the Cultivation of Humanistic Awareness at Student Level

In the course of learning at school, students have access to reading classics and thus are exposed to excellent culture, making it possible to integrate good humanistic thoughts into their own use. Meanwhile, it is necessary to introduce the concept of humanistic care in daily teaching, and guide students to sense the importance of humanistic care. If condition permitting, students can be introduced into the clinic at an early stage to experience the suffering of patients, which is more conducive to nursing students to cultivate their own humanistic spirit and to improve their humanistic accomplishment^{15,18}.

Increase the Hours of Humanities Courses and Proportion of Humanities Courses

Apart from ensuring professional learning, schools have the obligation to correspondingly increase required courses or elective courses in humanities, playing a crucial role in avoiding curriculum setting that over-emphasizes majors while neglecting humanities, and adding cases of ideological and political education and humanistic care in professional courses, so that professional courses are permeated with humanities. By adding courses such as "Interpersonal Communication Skills", we can teach nursing students some interpersonal communication skills and non-verbal skills, improve their communication skills, and thus strengthen their humanistic care ability²⁰.

Improve the Humanistic Quality of Teaching Teachers at Teacher Level

Teachers who influence the nursing students' caring ability should be set as role model. Research showed that the harmonious humanistic atmosphere of campus was connected with the nursing students' humanistic caring ability. Therefore, before carrying out humanistic education, a caring environment is supposed to be constructed from multiple dimensions at the beginning. Teachers are required to learn how to create a good teacher-student relationship, and students are told to

increase interaction, so that students can feel the charm and warmth of humanity in a loving environment. As a result, students' ability to care can be cultivated and developed. It is responsibility of schools to introduce high-quality educational talents, provide opportunities for teachers to receive training in view of humanities education, and increase assessment of humanistic knowledge to improve the humanistic quality of teaching teachers^{8,12,17}.

Create a Humanistic Atmosphere at the Hospital Level to Enrich the Form of Clinical Practice

First and foremost, hospitals should reflect the humanistic care of themselves concerning infrastructure and ward settings, render the humanistic perception of nursing students in hospitals, provide more opportunities for nursing students to communicate with patients, and strengthen the nursing students' caring practice ability. In addition, hospitals are expected to provide students with opportunities to practice their knowledge, and the teachers are supposed to give full display of their practical case teaching method, only in that case can students discuss the knowledge they have learned based on the cases, ask questions, and seek answers from teachers. Enough practice can better serve for the consolidation of relevant knowledge and theory.

Conclusions

Given that the humanistic care of nursing students started late, and the effect is not explicitly clarified, thus, the humanistic care ability of nursing students needs improvement. Nursing students' professional identity, interpersonal communication ability and lack of social resources are the main factors accounting for the development of humanistic care ability. A living person, composed of many aspects such as physiology, psychology, and culture, is the object of nursing. In strict accordance with the humanistic discipline, the essence and core of nursing is caring¹. Natural people experience the inevitable process of birth, aging, illness and death, which is inevitable for everyone. When we are sick, the disease brings us not only physical pain, but also negative experiences such as fear, loneliness, and helplessness. Therefore, care from medical staff not only helps patients

relieve their physical pain, but also helps patients regain the confidence to overcome the disease and gain spiritual comfort. In clinical work, apart from paying attention to patients' physical health, and to providing services through nursing knowledge and skills, nursing staff is expected to be a listener, listening to the description of physical disease status and the physical and mental effects of the disease given by patients. Meanwhile, nursing staff is also an assistant who is supposed to understand the patients' physical pain and its resulting inconvenience in life, as well as inner anxiety and fear. Care, encouragement and help of nursing staff make patients feel comfortable and hopeful, making them recover as soon as possible. Thereby, nursing staff achieves their own value¹⁴⁻¹⁶.

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

Ethics Approval

Not required.

Informed Consent

Not required.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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Authors' Contribution

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