Critique of a Study on Student Nurse Experiences Caring for Cancer Patients

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Abstract
Each section is clearly written and the purpose and findings are easily identifiable. The consistent shortcoming of the article is an absence of concise clear explanations on the findings related to student experiences and excessive material that appears to be opinions superimposed on the data. The study findings, conclusions, and dependability are evaluated as low to medium.

Sanford et al. (2010) conducted a qualitative research study on student nurse experiences caring for cancer patients. This article is a critique and evaluation of all aspects of the above study.

Critique of the Introduction
The introduction of the article is logically written and the content efficiently builds on each preceding idea. A thorough description of the magnitude of increasing incidences of cancer patients and severity of outcomes is excessive and off of the focus of the study. Good analysis is given of prior research concerning nursing students’ care of both cancer and end-of-life patients, and documented suggestions for improvement of nursing student cancer education. However, irrelevant discussion on pain management of cancer patients distracts away from the main purpose of the study. However, clear and substantial evidence supporting the necessity of the study is lacking. Insufficient evaluation is provided on prior research focused on the broader view of nursing student’s experiences when caring for cancer patients.

The literature review concludes with a statement about the shortage of practicing cancer nurses, which is off topic and does not connect clearly to the information on the purpose of the study nor previously described research. A clear purpose statement is provided outlining the goals of the research. Overall, the introduction provided moderately meaningful analysis and a clear purpose statement, the quality of the literature review is medium due to incomplete literature review, lack of information to support the study, and insufficient information about timeliness of the study.

Critique of the Methodology

Sampling
A purposive sample comprised predominantly of female junior students was utilized. Due to small
biased sample size it is improbable that an adequate representation or description of the student population and setting was achieved to permit and transferability to other settings. For example, more could have been provided on participating universities, student’s age, quantity of cancer patient experiences per participant, and the characteristics of the hospitals where the students were learning. Saturation was stated to have been reached, but this is still a concern because only three interview groups were sued. Saturation appears to have been decided in the analysis phase rather than during the interview phase. Notable differences were recognized in perceptions in quality of care provided by nursing staff and physicians, and whether prior cancer experiences in life proved to be beneficial or detrimental to the student in caring for cancer patients in the clinical setting. It is unclear how many students experienced these differences. More analysis could have been provided on the differences in experiences and perceptions found within the study. Further, failure to provide descriptions of student’s suggestions for improving the nursing curriculum in the results undermined the purpose and conclusion of the study. Thus, the results section is of medium quality due to inadequate information on discrepancies of experiences and suggestions for curriculum improvements, and poor generalizability of results.

The discussion section is written clearly. A greater analysis of the findings would have been of value. A very brief summary of the results is provided without adequate evaluation of discrepancies in students' experiences found both in the current study and upon comparison to previous studies. The majority of the discussion section focuses on improving nursing curriculum despite the fact that no recommendations by students were mentioned in the results section and only minimal information is provided in the discussion section without adequate quotations of direct student statements. Extensive focus is placed on previous research's suggestions without direct relation to the current study, and with much apparent inundating of the findings with the interviewer’s own opinions, not just what was communicated by the students. This was not entirely consistent with the statement that the truth value was maintained. Minimal limitations of the study are mentioned, namely human fallibility and the subjective nature of qualitative research. The study could have also provided limitations of using only three groups, insufficient data on quantity of experiences per participant, and the excluded criteria for qualitative research. The majority of the discussion section on future research studies needed to more accurately evaluate students' experiences in caring for cancer patients and subsequent curriculum changes necessary to more adequately prepare student nurses in the future. Thus, the discussion section is somewhat superficial and disconnected from the findings.

Critique of the Conclusion

The conclusion is concisely written but adds little

new understanding to the complexity of emotions, reflective thoughts, and concerns experienced by student nurses in caring for cancer patients. The conclusion restates findings from prior studies already mentioned in the introduction section. Therefore, the conclusion section somewhat weak due to limited explanations of any beneficial insight into nursing student experiences in caring for cancer patients derived from the findings.

**Summary**

Throughout the study report, each section is clearly written and the purpose and findings are easily identifiable. Despite some meaningful analysis on a few prior research and a clear purpose statement, the literature review appears incomplete due to lack of information to support the study, and unexplained timeliness. The methods section provides insufficient information to fully evaluate rigor and would be strengthened by integration of appropriate qualitative criteria, notably negative case analysis, interviewer and analysis corroboration, and transferability. The results section needs to add information on discrepancies of experiences and suggestions for curriculum improvements. The discussion section needs more analysis of the current study’s findings and comparison to previous studies, a fuller disclosure of the study limitations, and needs to add clearer direction for future research. Lastly, the conclusion section confirms the insignificance of the study does not add beneficial insight into nursing students’ experiences in caring for cancer patients and useful recommendations for nursing curriculum improvement in cancer education and clinical preparation, which is the core purpose stated for the study.

Overall, for the reasons explained above, the study findings, conclusions, and dependability are evaluated as low to medium. The importance of this topic argues for further studies that address the above points.

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**REFERENCES**