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The Extent of Disability Education in Three Levels of Nursing Education: A Descriptive Quantitative Study

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Purpose:

- This quasi-experimental research project, completed by a Qualtrics survey, assessed the knowledge and confidence of baccalaureate, masters, and Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) nursing students' about caring for *People With Disabilities* (PWD).
- Participants completed a Qualtrics survey to assessed the knowledge and confidence about caring for *People With Disabilities*.

Background:

- *People With Disabilities* experience inequities in health care (Stillman et al., 2021). Overcoming barriers for *People With Disabilities* is key to providing accessible, quality healthcare for this marginalized population.
- Many healthcare workers have *negative attitudes* when caring for *People With Disabilities*.
- Healthy Peoples 2030 advises that there is an increase and inclusion of core clinical prevention and population health content in undergraduate graduate training programs (Health Peoples 2030).
- Qualify as diverse and marginalized in today's healthcare system (Edwards et al., 2022) even though they are protected under the American with Disabilities Act from discrimination.
- American Academy of Colleges of Nursing *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (2021) states; "Shifting U.S. population demographics, health workforce shortages, and persistent health inequities necessitate the preparation of nurses able to address systemic racism and pervasive inequities in health care" (p. 5).

Method:

Replicated study from one completed at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University (Stillman & Williams, 2016).

The survey was:

- Modeled after the 18-question survey done through the medical college.
- Minor revisions for the nursing student population, but the major intent remained intact.
- University IRB was obtained.
- Deployed through the students' course management system.
- Initiated with a cover page that explained the intent of the survey and told students it was voluntarily, and they could opt out at any time.
- Launched in the beginning of the spring semester, left open for one month and two reminders were provided.
- Completing the survey was implied consent.

Data/Results:

Qualtrics survey was completed by 92 respondents.

Eighty-three (83) identified as female and nine (9) as male.

- Of the 92 respondents, 38 were BSN students, 44 were MSN students, and ten (10) were DNP students.

BSN:

- Of the total participants the accelerated second-degree one-year program students equaled 13% ($n = 12$), and Junior and senior traditional and two-year second-degree students made up 13% juniors ($n = 12$) and 15% seniors ($n = 14$).

MSN:

- Of the total participates 28% ($n = 26$) MSN students were in their third year of education, 15% ($n = 14$) were in their second year and 7% ($n = 4$) were first year MSN students.

DNP:

- Of the total participates 2% ($n = 2$) DNP students where in year two, 4% ($n = 4$) in year three, 4% ($n = 4$) in their fourth year or more.

- Students/respondents asked *were educated* about the Americans with Disabilities Act? *Of the total participants 65% were not educated & 25% had only "clinical learning."*
- Students/respondents *had no formal education* in their BSN, MSN, DNP program regarding *People With Disabilities*? *Of the total participants, 58% stated no formal education.*
- Students/respondents *did not* feel comfortable accessing community services for patients and families with disabilities? *Of the total participants, 63% did not feel comfortable.*

Comfort level of Respondents in Assessment and Referrals:

Condition	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Mobility devices	3.58	0.88	0.77	72
Home Health Aides/Services	3.49	0.88	0.72	73
Durable Medical Equipment	3.33	0.76	0.58	73
Home Modifications	3.08	0.91	0.83	72
Accessible Transportation	3.13	0.89	0.79	71
Communication Devices	3.16	0.84	0.71	73
Occupational Therapy	3.51	0.82	0.67	71
Speech & Language Therapy	3.45	0.82	0.67	71
Physical Therapy	3.70	0.70	0.49	71
Vocational Rehabilitation	2.89	0.87	0.76	66

Comfort Level of Respondents Care for Patients with Specific Disabilities ?

Condition	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
Neurogenic Bowel	3.44	0.94	0.89	64
Neurogenic Bladder	3.39	0.94	0.89	74
Spasticity	3.07	0.83	0.69	73
Autonomic Dysregulation	2.96	0.88	0.77	71
Depression	3.21	0.92	0.85	73
Somatic pain	2.93	0.83	0.68	74
Neuropathic pain	3.11	0.85	0.73	73

Discussion:

- Results of this survey demonstrate the need for inclusivity in all levels of nursing curricula about caring for *People With Disabilities*.
- Concern as to what students thought are *disabilities* as they study acute and chronic conditions in curriculum.
- Majority of *People With Disabilities* have mobility issues, emphasis on how to manage mobilization in the outpatient and acute settings.
 - Mobility as a topic is discussed in the fundamental or foundational courses in BSN programs but often not threaded throughout the curriculum.
- Graduate education is more population specific, and topics related to *People With Disabilities* can be threaded through curriculum especially in the the adult and geriatric specialties.
- Population specific graduate education as neonatal and pediatric may specifically discussed *People With Disabilities* when meeting tertiary objectives for neonates and children with special needs.
- Advance practice nurse content that is outline from certifying agencies support a threading of content throughout the curriculum: *People With Disabilities*.
- *Limitation: Low response;* *Replicate the student with new students-with incentives with a goal of a larger participation.

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