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2006-11-17T12:30:14Z
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An Assessment of the Genetic Knowledge of Final Year Diploma Nursing Students

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A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Nursing

Johannesburg, 2004

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to ascertain and examine the current genetic knowledge of the nurses in their final year of the Diploma in Comprehensive Nursing (General Nursing, Community Nursing, Psychiatric Nursing) and Midwifery.

The research design was an exploratory, descriptive, quantitative survey, using a sample of final year student nurses at two of the three nursing colleges in Gauteng. Data were collected through the use of a self-administered paper-based questionnaire, which was adapted from a questionnaire used for a study to assess the genetic knowledge of general practitioners (Trenton, 2003). The questionnaire was adapted using the broad outline for subject content given in the curriculum for the four-year Diploma in Comprehensive Nursing (General Nursing, Community Health and Psychiatric Nursing) and Midwifery, the South African Nursing Council regulations, and the Department of Health Policy Guidelines. Random sampling was utilised to select two of the three nursing colleges in Gauteng and the total population of final year students was used as the sample. Data were analysed by means of descriptive statistics.

It was concluded through this study that, although nurses showed fairly adequate knowledge in the areas of teratogens and multifactorial inheritance, they showed a lack of knowledge with regard to basic genetic inheritance patterns, genetic conditions, epidemiology and prenatal diagnostic techniques. It can thus be recommended that an expanded component of genetics be included in the basic curriculum of the four year Diploma in Comprehensive Nursing (General, Community, Psychiatric) and Midwifery programme in accordance with programmes initiated in other countries.