Assertiveness and Self-Esteem Among Nurses in a Tertiary Hospital in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

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ABSTRACT

The study describes the level of assertiveness and self-esteem among nurses and examines the relations between assertiveness and self-esteem. Quantitative descriptive correlational design was used in 100 nurse respondents working in one of the tertiary hospital in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) using demographic components, assertive behavior inventory tool (ABIT), and Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE). Data were analyzed. Results show that respondents are moderately assertive and have moderately high self-esteem. There is a significant relationship between assertiveness and the demographic variables while respondents’ demographics did not have significant relationship with the level of self-esteem. The findings also suggested that assertiveness and self-esteem are positively and significantly correlated. Nurses are recommended to have regular assessment of their assertiveness as it affects the self-esteem and assertiveness training or other intervention that would empower and improve other nurses who are less assertive, non-assertive, and have low self-esteem.

KEYWORDS

Assertive Behavioral Inventory Tool (ABIT), Assertiveness, Nurses, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Schedule (RSE), Self-Esteem

INTRODUCTION

In United Arab Emirates (UAE), the nursing workforce arecompose of multigenerational and multicultural nurses and the researcher have observed that some nurses have confidence in speaking directly to other healthcare professionals, whereas other nurses seem to be shy, scared or even intimidated, that they ask another colleague to relay the information to patients and or doctors. Assertiveness and effective communication is necessary for nurses, as they spend a majority of their work time communicating with doctors and other healthcare team. Nurses also use their communication skills in being a patient advocate and educator to patients and their families. A nurse with good self-esteem and high level of communication skills works confidently and delivers a high level of quality care. Unfortunately search in EBSCO information services, ReasearchGate and ProQuest returned

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no results found on the topic of assertiveness and self-esteem among nurses in UAE. Therefore the purpose of this study is to describe the current assertiveness and self-esteem of nurses that are working in one of the hospitals in UAE. A potential area of investigation that could serve as a groundwork that bring awareness of the current assertive and self-esteem practices of nurses, it could also reveal gaps that can be address to create ways where nursing assertiveness and self-esteem can be improve through various educations and trainings.

BACKGROUND

Assertiveness is considered a healthy behavior for all people that, when present, mitigates against personal powerlessness and results in personal empowerment. Nursing has determined that assertive behavior amongst practitioners is an invaluable component for successful professional practice (Kilkus, 1993). Despite many changes and developments in the nursing profession over the years, nurses are taking leadership roles, but in some health care facilities there is a long-held perception that nurses are not as important as physicians as decision-makers (Budryk, 2015). Moral distress may occur when a person knows the ethically appropriate action to take, but doesn’t take it because she/he feels powerless to do so, this will reduce a person’s ability to provide quality patient care (American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, 2008).

Department of Sociology in University of Maryland (2021) has defined self-esteem as either positive or negative orientation toward oneself; an overall personal assessment of one’s worth or value. Furthermore it has claim that self-esteem is developed through individual’s life experiences. In application to the nursing profession this could mean that nurse’s self-esteem could be positive or negative depending on their self-evaluation, experiences, influences and mentors. Nurses develop and enhance these skills every day of their nursing career, where they too become mentors for the others.

For nurses the ability to communicate and get the message across clearly can save a lot of time and make the work load a lot easier which means bad communication can makes things worse. A study entitled The Concept of Self-Esteem in Nursing Education and its Impact on Professional Behavior (Dimitriadou, 2014) has concluded that nurses with low self-esteem had difficulties in communication with colleagues and patients on the other hand those nurses with high self-esteem have better collaboration with colleagues and patients to better work performance. Hence high self-esteem is important in nursing profession.

There are several studies in different nations pertaining to assertiveness and self-esteem amongst nurses. A study on the level of assertiveness and self-esteem of 135 nurses in different hospitals in Thalasery, India was conducted by Binuja P (2020) has concluded positive correlation of nurses’ assertiveness and their self-esteem. Likewise study entitled Relationship Of Assertiveness and Self-Esteem among nurses conducted by Maheshwari and Gill (2015) in one of the hospitals of Punjab in Pakistan resulted to positive correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem among nurses. In Iran, a study on assertive behavior among nursing staff in a local hospital were done by Mahdi Hadavi and Mahdi Abdorrazaghi Nejad (2018) came out with conclusion of limited assertiveness in nursing and recommended to promote educational program to promote nurses communication skills and assertiveness. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) assertion amongst nurse managers was studied by Dr. Safaa Mohamed Abdelrahman and Dr. Manal Hassan Abo EL-Magd (2017), which found that more than half of the nurse managers that participated in the study were assertive and that assertive training behavior had a positive effect on the self-confidence of nurses. In Iran assertive behavior among nursing staff was studied by Mahdi Hadavi and Mahdi Abdorrazaghi Nejad (2017), found that 78.7% of the participants has limited assertiveness and has recommended the needs of educational program to improve nurses’ assertiveness and self-confidence. Another study was conducted in Japan by Shimitizu et al. (2004) concluded that assertive training has positively increased self-esteem amongst Japanese nurses, which assists and is needed to withstand challenges in the workplace. There was also a study conducted in Egypt by Naglaa, et al. (2016) on assertiveness amongst psychiatric nurses,