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Camp nursing as clinical placements for undergraduate nursing students

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Background: Although traditional clinical placements (hospital or community) are providing direct practice experience for nursing students, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN) programs are experiencing a shortage of these placements (Council of Ontario Universities, 2013). Various types of camps with diverse populations of campers could provide rich exposure to pediatric patients with medical problems, behavioral disorders, and learning challenges. Using summer camps as an alternative placement for nursing students could address the shortage of clinical placements and add diversity to the learning experience offered in the BScN program.

Methodology: A qualitative narrative design was used to explore how course level outcomes were achieved by fourth-year level nursing students in the camp setting. Course level outcomes, which are based on nursing competencies, are developed by educational institutions to measure a nursing student's performance. Data collection was done by phone interviews. Six registered nurses who have nursing experience in a camp setting participated in this study. By sharing stories, participants provided examples to demonstrate how nursing students can meet level outcomes while in this type of placement. Through data analysis, these stories were organized into themes to help identify if the collective experiences meet competencies for nursing students.

Results: Data analysis showed that nursing students can demonstrate: principles of patient safety, critical inquiry, preventative/promotional health, reflective practice and advocacy for health care services in the camp setting. These results support camp settings as a diverse, innovative clinical option for the undergraduate nursing experience.

Biography

Shelley Evans is a clinical instructor and lecturer in nursing. Her background also includes critical care nursing and currently works in emergency medicine in Detroit, Michigan. Because of her love of education and working summers as a camp nurse, she focused her master's thesis in education. She is currently a PhD student and hopes to continue her studies in education, specifically improving the curriculum for nursing students to improve the health and wellbeing for the LGBTQ population.

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