

7th Annual Congress on

Primary Healthcare, Nursing and Neonatal Screening

&

2nd International Conference on

Women's Health, Obstetrics and Female Reproductive System

July 27-28, 2018 | Vancouver, Canada

Preliminary investigation to improve nursing students ability to provide holistic care

Dale M Hilty

Mount Carmel College of Nursing, USA

In Waterman's (2007) dissertation, nursing students emphasized Watson's Holistic Carative exemplars of respect, knowledge, being responsible, considering outcomes of caring, competence, effective communication skills, developing a trusting relationship, advocating, flexibility, and assisting the patient to reach their highest level of wellness. Two major areas of focus illustrated students not incorporating the exemplars in clinical practice. First, during a senior precepted clinical rotation where faculty receives student handoff report about their patients, students may not demonstrate the carative exemplars. For example, students often repeat the unprofessional language (e.g., "frequent flyer", diagnostic labels, "drug seeker") used by some staff nurses. Prejudicial language can result in objectification which appears to influence nursing student indifference as opposed to kindness, separation vs. being present, and disengagement vs. engagement in caregiving. Second, students frequently focus on skills and task performance and are inattentive to the holistic care of the patient. This lack of patient-centered focus can adversely impact the patient, leading to ineffective and worsening health care outcomes. Our primary purpose was to explore the degree of compassion towards patients by junior and senior level nursing students. Six scales were selected: kindness, indifference, common humanity, separation, mindfulness, and disengagement. The correlational findings (N=41) revealed statistically significant positive associations among kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness scales (ranging from .554 to .782), and negative relationships with indifference, separation, and disengagement (-.296, to -.601). An intervention based on these findings may increase the compliance with holistic and professional behaviors.

Biography

Dale M Hilty, Associate Professor, received his PhD in counseling psychology from the Department of Psychology at the Ohio State University. He has published studies in the areas of psychology, sociology, and religion. Between April 2017 and April 2018, his ten research teams published 55 posters at local, state, regional, national, and international nursing conferences. His colleagues sharing the author line of this poster are Erin Dougherty, MSN, RN, Kerry Fankhauser, DNP Candidate, MS, RN, and Scott Dolan, PhD, RN.

dhilty@mccn.edu

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