



Cultural Competence in Nursing Education

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BACKGROUND

Health disparities in ethnic and racial minorities are well documented, and research supports cultural competent health care reduces health disparities in this population. The potential for health care dollar savings is approximately \$24 million dollars annually. Nursing education lacks policies that specifically address cultural competency education. There are many recommendations that guide the inclusion of cultural competence in nursing education, but there is little research to support that this increases the cultural competency of nursing students.

PURPOSE

Identify policies regarding the inclusion of cultural competency education across nursing schools in the US. Analyze the implications of omissions of specific cultural competence competencies.

DESCRIPTION

Nursing education is largely regulated by each state. State guidelines for nursing education list competencies for the minimum level of education. In this study, all 50 US states' nursing education curricula were evaluated for mention or inclusion of cultural competency specific curriculum competencies. Using an electronic survey utilizing a convenience sample accessed through a ListServ, all 50 states were surveyed and represented in the participants. This was compared to AACN guidelines and health disparity data.

LESSONS LEARNED

The policy analysis of the 50 states nursing education curricula indicates cultural competency is lacking as a nursing education competency. Many states follow the AACN guidelines, but this does not mandate how the curriculum is taught within the curriculum. Most states do not mandate how to incorporate cultural competence education into the curriculum. The common theme among the data is utilizing a "threaded" approach to incorporating cultural competence in nursing education. Some schools require a separate class to address the issue of cultural competence education, while some teach this as a concept in a concept-based curriculum. There is little research to show how this is actually taught in nursing schools, and there is a need to conduct further research to assess this impacts society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nurses have the unique ability to interact with patients on a deeper, more meaningful level and provide culturally competent health care. Nursing education must reflect the US recommendations for culturally competent health care providers. State boards of nursing must enumerate cultural competency in the curriculum plan for nurses. The potential economic impact for mandating cultural competency in nursing education is great as is the potential to reduce health disparities in diverse populations, thus creating a healthier US.

