



Nursing students' absenteeism in class/clinics: Reasons and remedies

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Abstract

Absenteeism among the students is a chronic problem and it needs to be dealt cautiously. This problem of absenteeism is growing among nursing students also. It should be handled properly; otherwise it will have an adverse effect on the quality of nursing care. This study was undertaken to understand the gravity of the problem by assessing the factors leading to absenteeism in theory as well as during clinical experiences.

Methodology: Cross-sectional approach was used to collect the data from 500 participants from selected nursing colleges by using purposive sampling technique. Structured questionnaire was prepared by doing extensive literature review on the problem raised through this research. Collected data was analyzed and presented in frequency percentage.

Results: Majority of the participants reported sickness, family functions, internal exams, better teaching materials on internet, teacher-students relationship, increase workload, lack of good IPR between staff nurses & students and feeling of homesick were the factors makes them remain absent during their theory and clinical sessions.

Conclusion: Reported factors leading to absenteeism among nursing students and their suggestive measures needs to be discussed and handled carefully. A conducive & motivational environmental atmosphere should be provided to the students to facilitate learning.

Keywords: absenteeism, nursing students, reasons, remedies, class, clinics

1. Introduction

Student absenteeism is a concern in higher education especially medical education. It results in inadequate learning and poor academic performance in those missing classes (Ramodike, 2007; Baker and Jansen, 2000). New course and new college environment sometimes makes it difficult for students to get acclimatized. Absenteeism can be one convenient way to escape from the curriculum (Park and Kerr, 1990). The purpose of any student coming to Nursing Institute is to learn Nursing science. The goal of undergraduate/Postgraduate Nursing education is to produce nurses with adequate knowledge and skill towards patient care and a healthy attitude towards patients and their families. Classroom lectures and clinics are the primary means of teaching for students. Nursing student's absenteeism in college is not only a loss of the individual student but also of the college and is also a loss of the society in terms of nursing care. Hence the aim of this project is to investigate why learners remain absent from the classes in nursing college and what could be the remedial measures. Students who are frequently absent are said to be at risk of not achieving their educational, social and psychological potential and their future seems to be dim because they may place themselves at risk of harm during periods of absence and are more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable activities or behaviours (Ramodike, 2007).

2. Objectives of the study

1. To identify the reasons of absenteeism among students from Nursing College.

2. To assess the opinion of the students regarding remedial measures in order to control and reduce absenteeism.

2.1 Research Methodology

1. **Research Approach:** Quantative approach
2. **Research Design:** Non experimental: Cross sectional design
3. **Variable:** Student absenteeism and Remedial Measures
4. **Population:** Nursing students of Diploma, undergraduate and Postgraduate Courses
5. **Setting:** Selected Nursing Colleges of Pune City
6. **Sample and sample size:** Nursing students from GNM, BSC & MSC Courses from selected colleges 500
7. **Sampling Technique:** Non Probability Purposive Sampling
8. **Description of the tool**
Section –I: Demographic Profile
Section – II: Reasons of students absenteeism: 3-point likert scale (30 items)
Section- III: Remedial Measures: open ended questions

3. Results

3.1 Demographic Description of Nursing Students

1. Age: 27.3% of them were more than 20 years of age
2. Gender: Majority (80.7% were female)
3. Marital Status: 86.2% were unmarried
4. Course: 47.8% of them were studying GNM
5. Class: Majority of them were studying in first year of the course
6. Socio-economic Status: 91.4% of them belongs to middle-class

7. Father occupational status: 88.7% of their father were employed
8. Mother's occupational status: 88.3% of their mothers were homemaker
9. Permanent Address: Majority (55.6%) of them were not from Pune.
10. State: 74.1% of them were from Maharashtra State
11. Type of Accommodation: 46.1% of them stays in Rented House

3.2 Absenteeism in Theory Classes Major Factors

1. 76.4% of the students have said "sickness"
2. 48.1% of students have reported "family functions"
3. 38.5% of students have mentioned that they take leave, when internal exams are near.
4. 27.6% of students said that "better teaching materials" are available on the internet.
5. 21.6% of students have reported "feeling of home sickness"
6. 20.9% of students have responded that students are not allowed to enter in the class as they come" late to the class".

Minor factors

1. Family problems/breakups (17%)
2. Continuous morning & afternoon sessions (16.3%)
3. Uncomfortable sitting arrangement (15.9%)
4. Unclean classrooms (14.5%)
5. Study at home is better (14.4%)
6. Non Functioning of electronic teaching aids (13.8%)
7. Boring subject/topic (12.2%)

3.3 Absenteeism during clinical experience Major Factors

1. 71.2% of the students have said "sickness"
2. 42.2% of students have reported "family functions"
3. 37.8% of students have mentioned that they take leave, when internal exams are near.
4. 24.8% of students reported that "numbers of clinical hours" are more.
5. 24.7% of students mentioned that "number of clinical assignments are more"
6. 24.7% of students said that "hospital nurses" are not cooperative
7. 22.1% of students expressed "increased workload"
8. 20.6% have reported that "late night studies"

Minor factors

1. Posting at Infectious ward (19.9%)
2. Less interested clinical area (19.9%)
3. Feeling Homesick (19.5%)
4. Disturbed Family (19.1%)
5. Lack of adequate articles to practice procedure (18.1%)
6. More number of patients allotted (15%)
7. Students problems are not addressed properly (13.8%)
8. Inadequate transport facility (13.6%)
9. Non conducive working environment (13.5%)
10. Long distance clinical area (13%)
11. Lack of practical skills (12.6%)
12. Personal life interference by teachers (12.1%)
13. Fear of clinical supervisors (11.8%)

3.4 Suggestions on remedial measures to curb down the problem of absenteeism

1. No Make-up duty & students will not be allowed to sit for the exam, if the attendance is less than minimum (37.2%)
2. Fine against absenteeism (amount will be decided by the college) and no makeup duty (23.2%)
3. Fine against absenteeism (amount will be decided by mutual consensus of faculty and student body) along with make-up duty (20.4%)
4. Students should allowed to attend the family functions with make-up duty of 1:1(73.3%)
5. No consideration of exams for frequently absent students (44.2%)
6. Student's friendly teaching faculty (57.2%)
7. Teachers should focus more on teaching nursing rather than non nursing issues (38.2%)
8. Mutual respected between a teacher and student should be maintained (60.5%)
9. Students problems needs to be addressed properly (58.5%)
10. Students should not be given any extra marks for participations in any event, if the absenteeism is more (41%)
11. Students counselling should be done regularly to identify the reasons of absenteeism (60.4%)
12. Students & Patients ratio should be maintained in the clinical area (59.2%)
13. Students should not be insulted by the teachers, in case of not responding and responding incorrectly (44.5%)
14. Parents should be informed regularly regarding students absenteeism (62.1%)
15. Teaching – learning strategies should be interesting to keep the students morale high (55.4%)
16. Prepare a policy on student's absenteeism and give it to students at the beginning (57.8%)

4. References

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