

## NURSING STUDENT'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLES OF CLINICAL INSTRUCTORS IN CLINICAL PRACTICE COACHING FOR PATIENT SAFETY

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### Abstract

Nursing education has a responsibility in creating the safety culture for all patients and health care providers in order to enhance health outcomes. Clinical instructors not only play the pivotal roles in assisting the students with clinical skills development, but rather in coaching patient safety. We conducted a qualitative study to explore the perceptions and expectations of nursing students toward the roles of clinical instructors in clinical practice coaching for patient safety. The study used a purposive sampling method for selecting participants for a focus group. The participants comprised 12 students from the profession program of Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Indonesia year 2013/2014. Data was gathered by conducting semi-structured interviews, and were analyzed by using content analysis process. Our findings revealed five main issues on safety that were perceived by nursing students: (1) the current patient safety practices, including the increasing awareness and actions of patient safety, (2) the safety incidents amongst the students during clinical practices, comprising the frequent exposure to the physical and psychological hazards, (3) safety incident management, including the absence of the protocols of handling system for the hospital staffs as well as the absence of the integrated incident database between the hospitals and universities, (5) barriers to the implementation of clinical safety among the students, including the absence of integrated implementation, monitoring, and reporting system for the safety incidents. This study concluded that the practice of safety only focused on the patients. Meanwhile, the practice of safety for health care providers including for nursing students was still low.

**Key words:** clinical instructor, nursing student, patient safety

### Background

The establishment of safety culture for the patients and health care providers, including for nursing students, is the essential duty of nursing education for the improvement of health outcomes. Tella, Susanna, et al (2014) indicated that the prevention of incidents and accidents are the implementation of patient safety and they should be the concern in nursing education.

The prevention may include the identification of hazards and the prevention of near-misses. Hazards are the agent, actions, or circumstances that are potentially harmful, while near misses are the events that did not result any injuries or damages to the patient but had the potential to do so (WHO, 2009)

### Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore the perspectives and expectations of the nursing students toward the roles of clinical instructors in coaching patient safety.

### Method

The research used a qualitative methodology with one-focus group. Twelve respondents from the profession program (Ners) of Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Indonesia year 2013/ 2014, were selected through the purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and were analyzed by using content analysis process.

### Results

This study showed that the nursing students perceived the following issues on safety practices: (1) there were awareness and actions of safety practices, proved by the provision of orientation on patient safety programs in the hospitals for the students, but there were lack of monitoring on the safety practices, (2) the exposure to physical and psychological hazards were the common incidents among the students, (3) there were inadequate reporting system and the tendency of hiding or closing the incidents, (4) protocols of incident reporting system have been acknowledged by the hospital staff, nonetheless, the

incident management system in the hospitals has not been well established. Also, there was no integrated and synchronized incident management system between the hospitals and universities, (5) the absence of integrated implementation, monitoring, and reporting system for the safety incidents became the barrier to the implementation of safety practices among the students

### Discussion

Coaching for patient safety is an essential role of clinical instructors to enhance the safety practices among nursing students. Nonetheless, during the clinical practices, nursing students perceived some challenges on the implementation of safety practices. The challenges included the unclear policies on safety practices, the absence of continuous coaching for safety practices, the high underreporting cases, and the absence of blame-free system.

Ideally, the clinical instructor must be familiar with the relevant policies. Nonetheless, many policies associated with the students and faculties exist, but they are not always clear (Gardner, Marcia & Suplee, Patricia Dumph, 2010). Furthermore, coaching for safety should be given continuously, starting from the beginning, during the process, and after

the clinical practices. Pre and post conference is the instance of a continuous coaching that may be performed by the clinical instructors. It is a platform to identify hazards and incidents experienced by the patients and nursing students (Girdley. Diana, Johnsen. Christine. Kwekkeboom. Kristine. 2009). Yet, the continuous coaching was not yet implemented.

Despite the high exposure of physical and psychological hazards among the students, the incidents were underreported. Moreover, some incidents were closed or hidden. The students commonly experienced low back pain and needle stick injury as the result of exposure to physical hazards. In addition, they experienced some psychological hazards, such as stress and under confidence that led them to feel afraid of doing wrong. Nonetheless, the cases were not reported. A study conducted by Small. Louis, Pretorius. Louise, Walters. Althea, Ackerman. Maria J. (2009) revealed the facts of underreporting incident cases. They found that 34 respondents out of 198 respondents (17%) had needle stick injury, but only half of the cases were reported.

During the coaching for safety, the clinical instructors also need to listen and respond to their students. By doing so, the students can express their feelings and

the eventually relieve their stress. The clinical instructors also need to provide necessary supports, including emotional supports for the students. Most of the underreported cases happened due to the fear of being punished. Therefore, it is a role of clinical instructor to ensure that the environment is built with a blame-free culture, and to provide adequate information concerning the necessary actions that need to be taken.

This study suggested the establishment of safety culture by establishing the safe working environment for nurses and nursing students, integrating the academic and clinical reporting system for safety incidents, and incorporating safety issues in the nursing education curriculum.

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