Mental Health Characteristics and Stressors of Traditional and Accelerated Baccalaureate Pre-Licensure Nursing Students

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Abstract

Mental health issues in college students are on the rise. Nursing students may experience higher stress and anxiety levels in relation to general college students, which can impact academic performance. However, limited data differentiates between traditional and accelerated students This descriptive study will compare mental health characteristics and stressors between these groups using the Perceived Stress Scale and the Psychological Distress Profile.

Background & Purpose

- Approximately 22% of young adults aged 18-25 have been diagnosed with mental illness.
- Nursing students have reported stress related to academic pressures and caring for patients during clinical rotations.
- Students with mental health problems are often not identified until in crisis suggesting a deficit in faculty knowledge about identifying behaviors that may indicate the beginning of mental distress.
- Accelerated (2nd degree) BSN students differ from traditional students related to age, diversity, family obligations, and financial challenges.

Purpose: Describe mental health needs in pre-licensure nursing students

Specific Aims:
1. Describe current mental health characteristics and stressors of Baccalaureate pre-licensure nursing students
1a. Describe differences between traditional first degree BSN students and accelerated 2nd degree BSN students on reported stressors and measures
2. Identify potential target areas for future mental health interventions to address common mental health issues and stressors.

Methods

- Descriptive, quantitative study
- Seeking to recruit 100 students from the traditional and accelerated BSN cohorts
- Recruitment will occur through email
- Participants will complete an online survey through Transform with three tools:
    - Demographics
    - Perceived Stress Scale
    - Psychological Distress Profile
- One open ended question for participants to identify what is currently most stressful

- Demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, GPA, marital status, caregiver status, housing location, food insecurity, diagnosis of anxiety/ depression, history of suicide attempt
- Perceived Stress Scale: 10 item standardized measure assessing the perception of stress
- Psychological Distress Profile: 20 item standardized measure of four common domains of psychological stress (anger, hopelessness, anxiety, and depression)

Results

- IRB approval is currently pending (anticipated mid August 2019)
- Data collection is expected to occur September & October 2019
- Data Analysis will occur November 2019
- Data Analysis will include descriptive and comparative statistics within and between groups

Conclusion

- Data from this study will be used to target interventions at the SON to reduce stress and improve well being. These can be specifically targeted to cohorts if differences exist.

- Data will also be used to develop and justify a grant proposal to support these efforts at the SON.
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