

# Clinical Learning Environment: Experience of Nursing Students

Neelam Thapa<sup>1</sup>, Rajesh Kumar Sharma<sup>1</sup>, Rakesh Sharma<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medical Surgical Nursing, Himalayan College of Nursing, Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India, <sup>2</sup>Department of Medical Surgical Nursing, College of Nursing, AIIMS, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India

## Abstract

**Introduction:** The clinical practicum is a large and important component of any nursing degree program. Experiences within clinical context are powerful in shaping student skills and attitudes to learning practice and professional development.

**Materials and Methods:** An exploratory descriptive study was to assess the clinical learning experience of nursing students by selecting 200 nursing students by stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using self-reporting rating scale tool.

**Result:** Majority (90.5%) of the participants were female and (96.5%) were unmarried. Findings of the study show that majority (90.5%) of students received orientation program before clinical posting, sometimes (76%) staff showed rude attitude to the students and sometimes very unprofessional with the nursing students such as scolding in front of patients and other health care team members, very few (33%) students were agree that articles in the ward were not in hygienic condition, majority (97%) of students agree that they maintained a professional relationship with the nursing staff, and 80.5% were comfortable with physical set-up of ward. Most of (79%) students re-evaluated weekly by nursing faculty, whenever students had stress and anxiety then they resolved it with coping mechanism, sometimes students (62%) found barrier in communication with staff or patient attendant due to some environmental factors.

**Conclusion:** The findings of the study would help to nursing educators to design strategies to create effective clinical learning environment to facilitate better and quality clinical learning for nursing students. Nursing faculties need to be concerned about solving students problems and support them in clinical areas. Faculty of nursing needs to plan clinical rotation in such a way that all nursing students can learn more in clinical setting.

**Keywords:** Nursing students, clinical learning experience, clinical learning environment

## INTRODUCTION

Clinical nursing education is a fundamental component in the pre-registration nursing curriculum. Its aim is to provide the students adequate time to observe role models, practice, and reflect on their clinical experience. Clinical education provides a mechanism for nursing students to extend classroom

learning into nursing practice environments. Internationally, this component of education has undergone continual change and modification since the move of nursing education into the tertiary sector. This change was most significant due to the shift from clinical education being part of a service-oriented course to an academic, university-based one.<sup>[1]</sup> Clinical learning defined as knowledge and skills which the nursing students acquire in the hospital posting arranged by nursing institution during their training or course. In health professional education, the clinical context is recognized as an essential arena for students to learn about practice in the “real” world.<sup>[2]</sup>

The clinical learning environment can influence nursing students learning positively or negatively. An environment that positively influences learning has been reported as where staffs are happy, friendly with good morale and attitude, cooperative, and willing to teach and guide students

Date of Submission: 11-09-2021

Date of Revision: 30-12-2021

Date of Acceptance: 05-01-2022

### Access this article online

Website: <http://innovationalpublishers.com/Journal/ijnr>

ISSN No: 2454-4906

DOI: 10.31690/ijnr.2022.v08i02.006

### Address for Correspondence:

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma, Himalayan College of Nursing, Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. E-mail: [rajeshsharma.hcn@gmail.com](mailto:rajeshsharma.hcn@gmail.com)

This is an open-access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial Share Alike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms

by providing quality patient care. Students feel confident and motivated to learn in an environment where they are respected, recognized, supported, and regarded as part of the team. In this contrast, relationship problems have been highlighted including staff being unfriendly, with bad attitude, hostile, and denying the students opportunities to learn. Poor relationship of nursing students with staff and faculty may lead to frustration and demotivation. Hence, these types of behavior are affecting students learning in acquisition of knowledge and skills to become competent practitioners.<sup>[3]</sup> A positive working relationship between nurses and students is vital to develop ongoing learning and foster emotional well-being. Relationships often take time to develop and are influenced by communication, willingness, previous experiences, and the attitudes of both the nurse and student. Continuity of the nurse/student partnership helps build effective relationships.<sup>[4]</sup>

Negative feedback with poor communication and lack of it may have negative impact on learning. It is believed that when students know their progress and deficiencies on their practice and improve on the weaknesses, they get motivated and become confidence hence optimizing learning, leading to growth.<sup>[5]</sup>

The primacy of clinical experience in the education of nursing students cannot be overstated: It is the lifeblood of nursing education. It is a more important component of the educational process than classroom learning. Senior nursing students were interviewed in one of the studies to better understand the clinical learning experience from the students' point of view. Results of the study revealed that the nursing students were indeed learning in their clinical experience. The major categories of learning were classified as nursing skills, time management, and professional socialization. The quality of learning was reportedly affected by the quality of the student's preparation, characteristics of the instructor, and the variety of clinical opportunities to which students were exposed.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Aim of study

The aim of the study was to assess the clinical learning experience of nursing students in selected teaching hospital of Dehradun.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, 200 nursing students were selected by stratified random sampling technique and an exploratory and descriptive study design was used for this study. A structured self-reporting scale was used as data collection instruments to assess the clinical learning environment of nursing students. The data collection tools used by the researcher are as follows:

- 1) Baseline/Demographic form: The form consisted to collect information from participants regarding their age, gender, marital status, program of study, year of program, motivated by whom in came in nursing profession, and marks secured in previous university examination.
- 2) Self-reporting Rating Scale: It was a pre-designed and pre-tested rating scale which consists of 12 items associated

to clinical learning experience of nursing students. It is a dichotomous type of rating scale which had two options agree and disagree. Participants had requested to tick marked (✓) on any one option on the bases of self-reported experience in clinical setting. The content validity of the baseline form and clinical learning experience were obtained by giving it to seven experts from nursing field along with the criterion check list.

- 3) The study was conducted in Himalayan Hospital and Himalayan College of Nursing of Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun. The study was approved by research committee and ethical committee of Himalayan College of Nursing and Swami Rama Himalayan University, Dehradun.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows that majority (96%) of nursing students were aged between 20 and 25 years, 90.5% were female, 96.5% of participants were unmarried, 41% of participants were motivated by self to come in nursing profession, and 57% of participants were got 61–70% in their last examination.

Table 2 shows that majority of students (94%) were maintaining a professional relationship with nursing staff, and 69% were comfortable to discuss clinical issues with ward in-charge. Majority students agreed that ward in-charge were giving clinical teaching, motivating them for new learning and clearing their doubts. Nearly half of the students had anxiety and fear during

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of sociodemographic characteristics of nursing students (n=200)**

Subject profile	Frequency (%)
Age in year	
20–25	192 (96)
26–30	8 (4)
Gender	
Female	181 (90.5)
Male	19 (9.5)
Marital status	
Married	7 (3.5)
Unmarried	193 (96.5)
B.Sc nursing	
B.Sc Nsg 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	40 (20)
B.Sc Nsg 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	40 (20)
B.Sc Nsg 4 <sup>th</sup> year	40 (20)
GNM	
GNM 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	40 (20)
GNM 3 <sup>rd</sup> year	40 (20)
Motivation	
Friends	7 (3.5)
Parents	81 (40.5)
Relatives	29 (14.5)
Self	82 (41)
Teacher	1 (0.5)
Marks obtain in the last university examination in %	
50–60	30 (15)
61–70	114 (57)
71–80	52 (26)
81 and above	4 (2)

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage agreement of students regarding clinical learning environment (n=200)**

Item	Frequency of agreement (%)
I maintained a professional relationship with nursing staff my during clinical posting	194 (94)
I am comfortable to ask or discuss clinical issues with ward in-charge	139 (69)
I get clinical teaching from ward in-charge during my clinical posting	114 (56)
I maintained therapeutic relationship with the patient and their family members	188 (92)
I clarify my doubts during my clinical posting from respective nursing faculty	183 (91)
Nursing faculty motivate us for new learning	175 (88)
My teacher approachable for me	183 (91)
Nursing faculty present in clinical posting to supervise me	24 (11)
I get stressed whenever I get posting in general ward	64 (32)
I get stressed whenever I get posting in critical ward	108 (53)
Nursing faculty helps me to relieve my anxiety in newly posting ward	130 (63)
I always experience fear to work with the staffs of different ward	88 (42)
I have done mistake most of the time due to my fear	89 (42)
My confidence level decreases whenever staff shows rude attitude	152 (75)
Many times I feel hesitation to ask question because they get irritated immediately	146 (71)
Nursing faculty showed positive attitude toward supervision	160 (80)
I get time to time feedback from my teacher	163 (81)
I am satisfied with supervision of my nursing faculty	166 (82)

posting in wards and nursing faculty had helped them to relieve anxiety by showing positive attitude. Majority of students (82%) were satisfied with supervision of nursing faculty.

## DISCUSSION

### Findings of the study

The result of student's view toward clinical experience was satisfied with the some clinical component. In this study, majority of students maintained a professional relationship with nursing staff and maximum 91% of students were approachable to the nursing faculty to clear their doubts whereas only 69% of students were able to approach to ward in-charges. A quantitative study conducted by Rani *et al.* (2011) the findings of the study shows that more than half (52%) of students were aged over 23 years and majority were female and preceptor maintaining a clinical learning environment, positively influencing the attitudes of staff towards students as well as the quality of learning experiencing. In findings it also shows that all (100%) participants indicated that there was a good team atmosphere in areas and participants reveled that they were encouraged to ask questions and their questions were answered satisfactorily. Further there was evidence of high satisfaction among students.<sup>[7]</sup>

In this study, maximum participants are comfortable with physical setup of wards but not comfortable with ward hygiene and equipment's. Some of students also find that there is no proper facility of drinking water, clean toilets, and classroom. A quantitative study conducted by Dehghani *et al.* supported the findings of the present study that some factors in clinical areas such as scientific knowledge in ward, obeying incorrect habits of the environment, sometimes wandering and confusion during absence of clinical supervisor, no knowledge about how to give care to the patients. Further such factors in clinical areas which will hinder the skills and quality of students.<sup>[8]</sup>

In the present study, maximum participants responded that they are regularly evaluated weekly by nursing faculty but not monthly. Two studies conducted by Karimi and Hossieni (2003) in Iran which supported the findings of the present study that is students are found to do staff work/task and not being evaluated properly by the instructor.<sup>[9]</sup>

In the present study, maximum participant responded that they are motivated by faculty and staff but they do not find the faculty in ward to supervise them. Nursing students are more stressed whenever they are having clinical posting in critical areas rather than general wards. Majority of student's commits mistake in wards because of fear and hesitate to work with staff but faculty helps them to relieve their anxiety and fear. A quantitative study conducted by Wong and Lee which supported the findings of the main study, in this student felt that they were making mistakes due to self-anxiety and fear of staff and clinical supervisor and staff's rude behavior left negative impact on nursing students. Staff nurse over all behavior and talk was very important for students. How they behave and how they taught new skills to nursing students.<sup>[10]</sup>

In the present study, more than 70% of students confidence level decreases whenever staff shows rude attitude and they hesitate to ask question to them. Few students responded that some of faculty is not showing positive attitude for clinical teaching and feedback. A quantitative study conducted by Motlagh (2021) which supported the findings of the main study, in this the nursing students had different experience of different clinical areas during education programme which include positive experience as well as negative experience. Positive experience of students leaded them to acceptance and high satisfaction of nursing field, means they thought that this is good area to serve mankind and negative experience developed rejection and hating nursing profession.<sup>[11]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study would help us as educators to design strategies for more effective clinical learning. Nursing faculties need to be concerned about solving students' problems in clinical practice and finding support in clinical area and findings support the need for faculty of nursing to plan clinical rotation in a way that nursing students be involved actively practice and learn in clinical area.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

None.

## SOURCE OF SUPPORT

None.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

## REFERENCES

1. Spencer J. Learning and teaching in the clinical environment. *BMJ* 2003;326:591-4.
2. Right to Education what does this mean for us? Available from: <http://www.hrc.co.nz/newsletters/manahau/2010/03/right-to-education> [Last accessed on 2015 Aug 10].
3. Balang RV. Nursing Students' Perception on their Clinical Learning Environment. Available from: [https://www.desktop/review.may/reviewoutcome%20of%20clinical.httpwww.calm.unimas.myinsite\\_v17article4.htm.htm](https://www.desktop/review.may/reviewoutcome%20of%20clinical.httpwww.calm.unimas.myinsite_v17article4.htm.htm) [Last accessed on 2015 Jan 19].
4. Right to Education; 2011. Available from: <http://www.hrea.org/index.php> [Last accessed on 2014 Sep 20].
5. Bryiane P. Medina Clinical Practice by the BSN IV Students. Global Trigger Tool Online Seminar on February 18; 2008-2009.
6. Mckennaa LG, Wellardb SJ. Discursive Influences on Clinical Teaching. *Nurse Education Today*; 2003. Available from: <http://www.google.co.in/url> [Last accessed on 2014 Oct 12].
7. Rani S, Brennan J, Timmons D. Clinical learning environment in a specialist forensic mental health setting: Perception of Irish student nurses. *AISHE J* 2011;3:17.1-15.
8. Dehghani KH, Dehghani H, Fallahzadeh H. The problems of the clinical education during internship period from the view of the instructors and the nursing students of Shahid Comparison of the gap between theoretical learning and nursing clinical services and its effective factors from students, professors and personnel's point of view. *Iran J Med Educ* 2001;1:43-8.
9. Karimi Z, Hossieni N. Clinical education evaluation in nursing students. *Iran J Med Educ* 2003;3:75.
10. Wong FK, Lee WM. A phenomenological study of early nursing experiences in Hong Kong. *J Adv Nurse* 2000;31:1509-17.
11. Motlagh FG, Karimi M, Hasanpour M. Iranian nursing students' experiences of nursing. *Iran J Nurs Midwifery*. 2012;17 2 Suppl 1:S107-14.

**How to cite this article:** Thapa N, Sharma RK, Sharma R. Clinical Learning Environment: Experience of Nursing Students. *Int J Nur Res*. 2022;8(2):72-75.