An exploration of the decision making activities of fourth year baccalaureate nursing students in the clinical setting

Investigators:
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Purpose

• To explore the client care related decision making of fourth year baccalaureate nursing students.
  – Explore the client related decision making of fourth year BScN students in varied clinical settings in order to gain insight into their decision making activities
  – Gain an understanding of the types of decisions that are being made by fourth year baccalaureate nursing students in their fourth year clinical setting
  – Describe the factors that enhance or impede decision making
Relevance

A description of the decision making of fourth year nursing students will enable the comparison of decisions and decision making activities to the entry level competencies for the RN identified by the CNO.

An identification of factors that influence student decision making will provide nurse educators with information on how to support and facilitate the decision making of nursing students.

The results will also provide a baseline to assist with exploring how students develop decision making as part of their nursing education.
Study Design

• Intrinsic case study
  - naturalistic inquiry is appropriate when little is known about the phenomenon and the intent is to gain insight through participant’s perceptions
  - it provides the opportunity for an in-depth look at the topic of student decision making through the utilization of various information-rich sources
Methods

• Purposeful sampling
• Primary data sources
  – Fourth year nursing students in the basic BScN program
  – Fourth year clinical tutors
  – Fourth year clinical preceptors
• Secondary data sources
  - Course materials
Data Collection

• Individual semi-structured interviews
  – Students/tutors/preceptors
• Student journals following two consecutive clinical days
Data Analysis

- Inductive analysis
- Constant comparative method
- N-Vivo
To Date

• Data collection commenced in Sept. 2002
  – 1\textsuperscript{st}- Level 4 students (9) + journals
  – 2\textsuperscript{nd}- Level 4 tutors (10)
  – 2\textsuperscript{nd}- Level 4 clinical preceptors (5 recruited, 1 interview completed)
Emerging Themes

• Types of Decisions
  – Resources (primarily people resources)
  – To challenge current nursing practice
  – Communication
  – Basic care decisions
  – Interdependent decision making engaged in frequently
    • “I don’t want to step on toes”
    • “I don’t want to upset anyone”
    • “they have the experience, they know what’s best”
• Influencing Factors
  – Preceptor/Nursing staff
  – Setting
  – Comfort
  – Knowledge/Experience
  – Feedback/reinforcement
  – Appraisal of risks/benefits to self (personal/academic/patient)