

Preparation of Registered Nurses for the Expected Role of Clinical Teaching in Malawi

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BACKGROUND

- In Malawi, the educational role of registered nurses (RN) is formally acknowledged and is, therefore, regarded as one of the required competences of a professional nurse.
- The Ministry of Health in Malawi indicates that supervision of students is one of the roles of a RN (Malawi Government Ministry of Health, 2011). This is in line with the Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi’s scope of practice for RN.
- Despite the inclusion of an education module in the nursing curriculum, RNs appear inadequately prepared for the role of clinical teaching.

OBJECTIVE

To explore and describe the perceptions of RNs and nurse educators on the adequacy of an education module in preparing nurse graduates for the expected clinical teaching role.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory, descriptive qualitative study was conducted. Data were collected in two phases. Focus group discussions with 9 graduate RNs in their first year of practice and semi- structured interviews with 3 nurse educators actively involved in the teaching of the education module. Data were analysed using the Braun and Clarke steps of thematic content analysis.

MAIN FINDINGS

1. Module equips students with basic knowledge on principles of education

“ There is a module on Principles and Practice of Education whereby they are taught the theories and some components of education.” (Nurse Educator 2)

“We used the skills mainly in other courses, like when giving health education, when teaching clients in the community (Community Health Nursing)”. (RN Group B)

“But when we are teaching them in class emphasis is on teaching patients and guardians.”(Nurse Educator 1)

2. Lack practical experiences on clinical teaching.

“The module is more of theory than practical because there is no platform to showcase the educational skills. This leaves the registered nurse with no confidence to perform the role when the time comes” (RN Group A)

“Lack of practical exposure leaves us unsure of what is expected of us as registered nurses with regards teaching students in the clinical area. Unlike in the management module which gave us the exposure to management issues during training” (RN Group B)

3. Component of clinical teaching is silent in the module

“Are we really clinical teachers? This was never emphasised in our learning.” Group A

“Yah, this is an eye opener, I also didn’t think of that. The way I have been implementing this module it was just classroom teaching and theories, but I didn’t take time to think of clinical teaching.” (Nurse Educator 3)

CONCLUSION

Undergraduate education is supposed to prepare nurses who are competent at the time of their entry into the workforce (Johnson et al., 2013).

There is therefore, a need for the undergraduate student RNs to be given the opportunity to practice the art of education; an objective which is not adhered to and misinterpreted by the nurse educators.

Nurse graduates continue to experience difficulties in balancing their preparation for practice with the expectations of the workplace (Kantar, 2012).

They find themselves facing a responsibility they were not prepared to tackle which is that of clinical teaching. It is recommended that educational reforms should be put in place to ensure nurse training programmes produce graduates who are fit for their prescribed responsibilities which include clinical teaching.

REFERENCES

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