

# Exploration of the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of student nurses toward people who are homeless

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## **Background**

- Civility is a crucial element in therapeutic communication and healthy patient relationships.
- Incivility can negatively influence healthcare environments and patient care.
- Vulnerable populations, especially homeless people, may be particularly at risk for experiencing uncivil behavior from health care providers.
- Homeless people believe they are treated with disrespect and lack of compassion by nurses, which constitutes a barrier to their seeking care.
- Nursing students may be unfamiliar with the needs of the homeless and hold negative perceptions about them.
- There is a dearth of literature exploring nursing students' perceptions of the homeless, and how these perceptions may affect their therapeutic interactions



## **Purpose**

- To explore the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of undergraduate student nurses toward homeless people.

## **Research Questions**

1. What are nursing students knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about people who are homeless?
2. What experiences have they had with people who are homeless?
3. How would they describe nursing care for people who are homeless?

## **Sample**

- Gender: 100% female
- Age: 20 years
- Race: 100% Caucasian

## **Method**

- Qualitative open-ended, semi-structured, audiotaped interviews to elicit descriptions of student nurses' perceptions of people who are homeless
- Purposive sample of 19 Nursing students, drawn from a baccalaureate nursing program in the Mid-west, USA
- Data analysis: concept analysis identification of themes
- Techniques used to determine trustworthiness of the study: audit trail and member checking

## **Preliminary Findings**

### **Emerging themes**

- We identified 4 major themes and 8 subthemes.
- Student perceptions
  - Definitions
  - Stereotypes
    - Appearance
    - Typical day
    - Typical night
    - How others treat them
- Experience
  - Self-directed
  - Community directed
  - Superficial/no contact
- Care of the homeless
  - Self-care
  - Nursing care
    - Ideal
    - What they think really happens
- Ways to teach: add to current courses, immersion

## **Discussion/Implications**

- Students had a wide range of experiences with homeless people, yet even those with deeper experiences held stereotypical views.
- Interactions with homeless people evoked emotional responses.
- It is important to help students understand the complexity of living homeless and how this can impact health care.
- Participants recommended immersion as an effective strategy to teach students about homelessness.

