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Perceptions of nursing teachers and students on full care: an exploratory descriptive study

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ABSTRACT

Aims: To understand the perceptions of comprehensive care on the part of teachers and students involved in a nursing course; to identify whether comprehensive care is being discussed in the academic training and, if so, how it has been approached. **Method:** This is an exploratory and descriptive study, in which a qualitative approach was used. This study was conducted with six students and seven nursing teachers of a higher education institution located in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul, between the months of December, 2010 and January, 2011. **Results:** Three major themes have emerged: the construction of completeness; full care of understanding and; nursing education with regard to comprehensive care. **Conclusion:** Comprehensive care is a gradual construction that emerges from the relationships and the deconstruction of linear practices focused on technician actions. Full and comprehensive care must permeate the actions, the knowledge and the practice of nurses. For this reason it must be addressed during academic training.

Descriptors: Nursing; Nursing Research; Comprehensive Health Care; Delivery of Health Care; Nursing Care.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that comprehensive care, one of the principles of the Unified Health System (UHS), is considered a major challenge for health managers and professionals⁽¹⁾. It requires a care delivery that involves the different dimensions of the human being; however, in order to ensure that it is applied satisfactorily, it is necessary that the production of knowledge is geared toward the same purpose⁽¹⁾. In this sense, it is well known that nurses are noted for the comprehensive care that they provide to their patients. The education they receive advocates the appreciation/recognition of the social context, the identification of the needs and expectations of the users, the need for interaction with various professionals, and an ability to promote the interaction between users and the health team, thus generating comprehensive and integrated care⁽²⁾. Therefore, comprehensive care is an issue that needs to be addressed in the training of these professionals.

AIM

To understand the perception in terms of comprehensive care of teachers and students of the nursing course, to identify if this aspect is being addressed as part of their academic background and, if so, how it is being done.

METHOD

This is an exploratory and descriptive study that adopts a qualitative approach. The subjects were six students and seven teachers of nursing of a higher education institution located in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul. Data collec-

tion took place between the months of December, 2010 and January, 2011 and was based on the focus group technique. Specifically, three focus groups were held with students and three teachers, totaling six sessions. The discussions were recorded and later transcribed. For data analysis, we used the content analysis technique in an attempt to identify common themes. Ethical procedures were followed according to Resolution 196/96 of the Ministry of Health⁽³⁾. The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Rio Grande - FURG, under No. 140/2010.

RESULTS

The analysis of the data that has emerged from the group involving the teachers has enabled the identification of the following themes: the construction of completeness; an understanding of comprehensive care and; nursing education on comprehensive care. Sub-themes: Graduation aimed at organization or disorganization: the training of nurses from the perspective of teachers; comprehensive care and its interrelationships; the continuous and dynamic process of construction and deconstruction. Of the group data emerging from the student focus groups, the following themes emerged: allowing transformation: the training of nurses from the students' perspective; subjective interaction with the individual and with others; subject-subject complex construction.

DISCUSSION

It is understood that talking about comprehensive care immediately leads to comprehensive care, because when human beings

seek assistance they are not only seeking cure for an illness, but also a service that aims to provide them with acceptance and full attention, with a view to health promotion⁽¹⁾. The search for comprehensive care includes the deconstruction of linear practices focused on techniques, as well as taking professionals out of their comfort zone and promoting a shift of thought. We highlight the need for transformation with regard to training so that that it is focused on the real health needs of the population and on an understanding of the human being as a whole, as humans cannot be viewed in fragmented parts. In order to achieve this purpose, it is necessary to break with the established models and accept that we are all holders of different types of knowledge which, once shared, generate other types of knowledge that come to add to the provision of care. Participants understand that nurses are the disseminators of comprehensive care given that they are close to the patients and understand their context and their real needs. For this reason, we emphasize the importance of discussing the training of these professionals, as teaching completeness goes beyond lectures in that it involves their experience in practical situations. When teaching in these circumstances, there is a better learning and understanding of what this principle is⁽⁴⁾. However, building completeness, both in teaching and in practice, requires changes, ranging from the assurance of dialogue to the establishment of partnerships between the actors involved in the process, that is, the representatives of education, health services and the community⁽⁵⁾.

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