

The Compliance of Safe-Work Behaviors among Undergraduate Nursing Students with Different Clinical Experiences

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Abstract : Background: Occupational injuries among nursing profession were found related to repeated bedside nursing care, such as transfer, lifting and manual handling patients from previous studies. Likewise, undergraduate nursing students are also exposed to potential safety hazard due to their similar work nature of registered nurses. Especially, those students who worked as Temporary undergraduate nursing students (TUNS) which is a part-time clinical job in hospitals in Hong Kong who mainly assisted in providing bedside cares appeared to at high risk of work-related injuries. Several studies suggested the level of compliance with safe work behaviors was highly associated with work-related injuries. Yet, it had been limitedly studied among nursing students. This study was conducted to assess and compare the compliance with safe work behaviors and the levels of awareness of different workplace safety issues between undergraduate nursing students with or without TUNS experiences. Methods: This is a quantitative descriptive study using convenience sampling. 362 undergraduate nursing students in Hong Kong were recruited. The Safe Work Behavior relating to Patient Handling (SWB-PH) was used to assess their compliance of safe-work behaviors and the level of awareness of different workplace safety issues. Results: The results showed that most of the participants (n=250, 69.1%) who were working as TUNS. However, students who worked as TUNS had significantly lower safe-work behaviors compliance (mean SWB-PH score = 3.64 ± 0.54) than those did not worked as TUNS (SWB-PH score = 4.21 ± 0.54) ($p < 0.001$). Particularly, these students had higher awareness to seek help and use assistive devices but lower awareness of workplace safety issues and awareness of proper work posture than students without TUNS experiences. The students with TUNS experiences had higher engagement in help-seeking behaviors might be possibly explained by their richer clinical experiences which served as a facilitator to seek help from clinical staff whenever necessary. Besides, these experienced students were more likely to bear risks for occupational injuries and worked alone when no available aid which might be related to the busy working environment, heightened work pressures and high expectations of TUNS. Eventually, students who worked as TUNS might target on completing the assigned tasks and gradually neglecting the occupational safety. Conclusion: The findings contributed to an understanding of the level of compliance with safe work behaviors among nursing students with different clinical experiences. The results might guide the modification of current safety protocols and the introduction of multiple clinical training courses to improve nursing student's engagement in safe work behaviors.

Keywords : Occupational safety, Safety compliance, Safe-work behavior, Nursing students

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