

Developing the Involvement of Nurses in Determining Health Policies

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Abstract : Background: World Health Organization emphasizes the contribution of nurses in planning and implementing health policies and reforms. Aim: To evaluate nursing students' attitudes towards nurses' involvement in health policy issues. Methods: Mixed-methods; qualitative and quantitative - a descriptive study. Participants - nursing students who were enrolled in their last year in the undergraduate program (BSN). Qualitative data included two open-ended questions: What is health policy and what is the importance of studying health policy, and 18 statements on the Likert Scale range 1-5. Results: Qualitative analysis revealed that the majority of students defined health policy as a set of rules and regulations that defined procedures, borders, and proper conduct. 73% of students responded that nurses should be active in policymaking, but only 22% thought that nurses were currently involved in political issues. 28% thought that nurses do not have the knowledge and the time needed (60%) for political activity. 77% thought that the work environment did not encourage nurses to be politically active. Nursing students are aware of the importance towards nurses' involvement in health policy issues, however, they do not have role models based on their low evaluation regarding nurses' involvement in the health policy decision making process at the local or national level. Conclusions: Results emphasize the importance and the need of implementation the recommendation to include "advance policy changes" as core competency in nursing education and practice.

Keywords : health policy, nursing education, health systems, student perceptions

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