Nurses' Perception and Core Competencies for Disaster Preparedness: A Study from the Western Region of Turkey

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Abstract : Aim: To identify nurses' perceived competencies for disaster preparedness. Background: Recently, the number of disasters has increased worldwide. Since disasters often strike without warning, healthcare providers, especially nurses must be prepared with appropriate competencies for disaster procedures. Nurses' perceptions of their own competencies for disaster preparedness need to be evaluated to aid in the creation of effective national plans and educational programs. Design: This study was conducted with a descriptive and cross-sectional design. Methods: Nurses' perceptions were assessed using the 13-item Demographic Profile Questionnaire that is based on previous literature and the 45-item Nurses' Perception of Core Competencies for Disaster Preparedness Scale (NPCDPS). Data were collected from June to September 2014 from 406 (79.9% return rate) Turkish nurses working in the western region of Turkey. Results: At the end of the study, it was found that out of the nurses whose mean age was 31.27 ± 5.86 and mean of working time was 8.07 ± 6.60 by the time vast majority of the nurses were women (85.7%), married (59.4%), bachelor's degree holder (88.2%) and service nurses (56.2%). The most potential disaster that nurses think is an earthquake (70.9%) by the time majority of nurses consider having a role as a nurse at every stage of disasters. The mean total point score of nurses' perception of disaster preparedness was 4.62. The mean total point score of the nurses from the Nurses' Perception of Core Competencies for Disaster Preparedness Scale was 133.96. When the subscales' mean scores are examined, the highest average of the mean score is for Technical Skills (44.52), and the lowest is for Critical Thinking Skills (10.47). When the subscales of Nurses' Perception of Core Competencies for Disaster Preparedness Scale compared with sex, marital status and education level out of independent variable of nurses there is no significant difference (p > 0.05); compared with age group, working years, duty and being with a disaster out of independent variable of nurses there is a significant difference (p ≤ 0.05). Conclusion: Nurses generally perceive themselves as sufficient at a 'medium level' in terms of meeting the core competencies that are required for disaster preparedness. Nurses are not adequately prepared for disasters, but they are aware of the need for such preparation and disaster education. Disaster management training should be given to all nurses in their basic education.

Keywords : disaster competencies, disaster management, disaster nursing, disaster preparedness, nursing, nursing administration, Turkish nurses

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