

ABSTRACT

Clinical placement during training: A phenomenological study.

This interpretive phenomenological study was conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Nursing Science. This was conducted in the School of Nursing, Colombo, Sri Lanka and set out to understand the experiences of nursing students during their clinical field placement from their viewpoint.

The aim of the study was to identify strengths and weaknesses of nursing students' clinical placement and to establish some strategies to overcome weaknesses and to improve the clinical experience of the students. Ten final year students were interviewed. In depth semi structured interviews were conducted, tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using van Manen's (1990) phenomenological guide.

Three key themes and clusters of sub themes emerged as result of thematic analysis: Learning need and working role, Acceptance to the nursing team and Support from the school. Under each key theme, related subthemes were discussed. Workload, lack of equipment, influence of the ward manager, negative attitudes of the ward staff, lack of guidance and supervision, lack of learning opportunities and no respect for the students' dignity were identified as major threats to the students' development during their clinical field placement. Several other subthemes related to support were identified including: Theory practice gap, related knowledge and supervision in the clinical field.

Guidance and supervision, appreciation and encouragement, acceptance, support from the ward manager and other nurses were some of the positive aspects that were identified in this study. Analysis revealed that nurses and nurse managers could make invaluable contributions to student development during their clinical field placement. Implications and recommendations were made based on the findings and highlighted the necessity for further investigation of the topic.