



NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY

NURSES ON THE FRONT LINES: ADDRESSING SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN NURSING PRACTICE

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SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- Social determinants of health (SDOH) are “the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age” (WHO, 2016).
- These important characteristics of the human experience are receiving increased attention due to their influence on health, disparities, and quality of life.
- Nurses on the front lines have an opportunity to have a significant impact on health status among the most vulnerable populations by addressing SDOH as a part of their daily practice.



SDOH AND NURSING PRACTICE

- Nurses and other healthcare providers can be on the front lines of addressing these conditions on the individual level.
- Nurses are in a unique position to implement interventions that address SDOH and their related health outcomes on an individual basis.

SDOH AND NURSING PRACTICE

- Nurses must develop a comprehensive understanding of the SDOH and a specific set of assessment skills to address these sometimes intimate issues in practice.
- The nursing literature in the United States with regard to SDOH is SPARSE.
- Not intentionally incorporated into nursing curricula.



PROJECT

- The purpose of this research was (a) to determine the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of nurses regarding SDOH, (b) to evaluate the impact of simulation on their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of social determinants of health, and (c) to discover how the experience will translate into practice.
- Goal was to demonstrate that mid fidelity simulation experiences for RN-BSN students can lay the foundation for the development of clinical reasoning, cultural competence, and awareness of social determinants of health among various patient populations.
- Grant funded by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Original research question was, “ Does participation in a simulated experience impact nurses knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs related to SDOH?”.



Methods – PHASE 1

- Sample
 - N=107
 - RN- BSN students in Baltimore Metropolitan area
 - Average years of practice 7
 - Across multiple specialties; primarily acute care settings

METHODS

- SDOH Knowledge, Attitudes, and Beliefs Survey
- Reflective narrative completed following the simulation experience. Questions included:
 - *What was the most influential part of the experience?*
 - *How do you anticipate that participating in the simulation will change your professional nursing practice?*
 - *What new insight related to the Social Determinants of Health have you gained?*
- Simulation experiences were incorporated into three nursing courses in throughout the program.

METHODS- SIMULATIONS

- Pre-Brief
 - Readings
 - No judgment zone
- Simulation
 - 3 simulations in three courses
 - Various reactions
- Debrief
 - Trained faculty and content experts



SIMULATION WITH STANDARDIZED PATIENTS



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- Data revealed that nurses have a high level of discomfort and anticipate patient discomfort related to addressing the SDOH in nursing care.
- They voiced a lack of skill, lack of time, and a dependency on other professionals to address these issues in their own care.
- The nurses in this project were also challenged by the communication skills necessary to uncover the impact that SDOH may have on health.
- This project revealed that further exploration is necessary to uncover why nurses feel discomfort with this seemingly essential part of basic nursing practice.



DISCUSSION

There is a **pressing need** to address how nurses can best assess for SDOH and provide interventions that mitigate related health outcomes, within the current fast-paced practice environment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING

- Back to basics
 - Building blocks to create trusting environments
 - Caring
- Simulation and Experiential Strategies
- Incorporate community resources in new employee orientation and residency programs
- Provide access to information r/t resources on organization portals
- Encourage participation in community outreach activities.



BIG PICTURE ...

- There must be a paradigm shift among nurses so that they view addressing SDOH as part of nursing practice and not something that is delegated to others.
- Nurses must be part of the larger conversation related to SDOH as there are potentially 3.1 million opportunities to make significant impacts on the health status of the most vulnerable.

QUESTIONS????

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