



1. Background/Introduction

Peri-anesthesia nurses are key personnel in managing safety risk and preventing patient harm. With significant nursing shortages, there is a critical need to train and recruit nurses to this complex area. Limited curricular exposure, clinical opportunities, and peri-anesthesia instruction in undergraduate nursing programs have led to a decline in nurses seeking peri-anesthesia positions and an increased staff turnover.

2. Purpose

The specific aim of this exploratory quantitative study was to determine if peri-anesthesia nursing educational activities, particularly simulation, influence student interest in pursuing peri-anesthesia nursing careers.

3. Process/Procedures

Students in two different nursing tracks, on campuses in two different states, and at various points in their nursing education participated in a peri-anesthesia simulation covering care of the surgical patient in 3 stages: in Preop, into the OR, and then to PACU. Due to COVID-19 challenges, this in-person simulation was converted to a virtual simulation mid-way through the academic term, and therefore, approximately one half of students completed the simulation in-person while the other half completed the simulation in a virtual format.

4. Results

Thirty-nine percent of students indicated that the simulation and peri-anesthesia education increased their interest in pursuing peri-anesthesia nursing. There was no statistically significant difference in interest in pursuing peri-anesthesia nursing between the virtual or in-person simulations. In all student groups, students with an interest in peri-anesthesia nursing prior to simulation averaged only nine percent. **Table 3**

Table 3: Increased Interest		# of Participants	Agree	Unsure	Disagree
Campus	Omaha	159	40.9%	39.0%	11.9%
	Phoenix	32	61.1%	5.6%	11.1%
Track	Traditional	111	45.9%	40.5%	6.3%
	Accelerated	80	31.3%	36.3%	21.3%
Learning Mode	Virtual	93	37.6%	39.8%	14.0%
	Face to Face	98	41.8%	37.8%	11.2%

5. Limitations

The study's limitations included data from a single university. The study was further limited by a lack of opportunity for virtual students to complete psychomotor skills, and a reliance on self-report data.

6. Conclusions/Implications for Practice

Both in-person and virtual simulation show promise for increasing knowledge of and interest in peri-anesthesia nursing in baccalaureate nursing students. As nursing programs continue to struggle with clinical placement opportunities and limitations on in-person activities, robust in-person or virtual simulation experiences may positively influence students toward a future in peri-anesthesia nursing. **Table 2**

Table 2: Increased Knowledge		# of Participants	Strongly Agree	Agree
Campus	Omaha	159	81.1%	18.9%
	Phoenix	32	68.8%	31.3%
Track	Traditional	111	82.9%	17.1%
	Accelerated	80	73.8%	26.3%
Learning Mode	Virtual	93	78.5%	21.5%
	Face to Face	98	79.6%	20.4%