

Perioperative Nursing Simulation and its Influence on Student Nurses' Career Interest

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Background Information: Perioperative 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 perioperative instruction in undergraduate nursing programs have led to a decline in nurses seeking perioperative positions and an increased staff turnover.

Objectives of Project: The specific aim of this exploratory quantitative study was to determine if perioperative nursing educational activities, particularly simulation, influence student interest in pursuing perioperative nursing careers.

Process of Implementation: Students in two different nursing tracks, on campuses in two different states, and at various points in their nursing education participated in a perioperative simulation. 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. Post-simulation evaluation of data from students was conducted.

Statement of Successful Practice: Thirty-nine percent of students indicated that the simulation and perioperative education increased their interest in pursuing intraoperative nursing. There was no statistically significant difference in interest in pursuing perioperative nursing between the virtual or in-person simulations. In all student groups, students with an interest in perioperative nursing prior to simulation averaged only nine percent.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: Both in-person and virtual simulation show promise for increasing knowledge of and interest in perioperative 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 perioperative nursing.