

Perspective of nurses working in medical-training hospitals in Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province towards continuing education

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Abstract: Information about perspective of nurses on continuing medical education is important in promoting the program. In this descriptive study, 184 nurses working in medical-education hospitals of Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad were participated. A questionnaire was developed in five sections: demographic and content-area information, management information, satisfaction information, and motivation information. The collected data was analyzed using SPSS. Based on the results, at most, 63% of the participants in the study were satisfied with agreement of the contents with new scientific discoveries, 63% were satisfied with the appropriateness of the contents with their needs, and 52% were satisfied with the management of the programs. In general, nurses had average evaluation, about the contents of the program, management, satisfaction, and motivation in continuing education programs. The majority of nurses, participating in continuing educational programs, had average evaluation towards content of the program, program management, satisfaction with programs, and motivation for participation. It is suggested to review the various parts of the programs and implement the requirement evaluation before any education progress.

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Introduction:

At every level of education, learning reserves decrease over time (1). One of the problems is trying to keep the acquired knowledge especially about sciences whose domains are changing rapidly (2). Knowledge has a half life of approximately two and a half years and after that time, it is not considered up-to-date, and is considered old (3). Nurses are persons who have a close relationship with patients, other health teams and the society, and due to the rapid advance of science and technology, they should be aware of all skills and new techniques about care. So, considering the importance of nurses' knowledge, continuing nursing education can be used as a useful method to maintain professional formalization and prevention of its stagnation. On the other hand, continuing nursing education is needed as a way to deal with retardation and a guarantee of qualitative

and quantitative work improvement and increased levels of professional motivation and courage (4). Continuing nursing education is a means for nurses to respond to rapid changes in health system and increase their professional skills (3).

Today, continuing nursing education is an inevitable necessity which aims to preserve and promote knowledge and professional skills of medical graduates community, and ultimately to increase public health. Trying to hold programs decently, selecting appropriate methods for teaching and continuing education programs and then evaluating learners in order to improve their qualities are essential (5). Experts believe that university education does not prepare nurses to do practical cares enough and they need to have continuing education in this regard (6).

Literature Review

In a study conducted by Charkazi et al in Golestan, results showed that subjects had "very poor" and "poor" viewpoints about retraining programs and expressed that their motivation to participate in programs is to gather points for job promotion (7). In another study conducted by Zahdpasha and Canaani in Babol, results showed that 3.13 percent of the subjects participated in a retraining program for the first time. 75 percent believed that the number of participants will be reduced after removing the points of retraining, 44.7 percent were aware of the continuing education rules, and 61.7 percent had full knowledge of its goals. 68 percent evaluated programs in accordance with their job requirements, 30.3 percent believed in the necessity of the presence and absence and 45.2 percent considered necessary to pay the registration fee. Also, 71.6 percent of general practitioners and 59.7 percent of specialists considered programs containing new information (8).

Method:

In this study that was conducted as census, the nurses participating in continuing education programs in the Yasuj University of Medical Sciences (184 people) in the period of 2008-2009 were selected as the sample. The data collection tool was a questionnaire that was evaluated by faculty experts and education experts, and after the necessary modifications, its formal and content validity was

accepted and its reliability was determined after a preliminary study, through the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.85. The questionnaire included demographic characteristics and questions regarding four areas: program content (7 questions), management (6 questions), satisfaction (5 questions), motivation (4 questions) and two open end questions. The sampling method was simple and based on objective, and the interviewers were presented during the preset retraining programs in three cities, namely Yasuj, Gachsaran and Dehdasht, and after the programs, they provided participants with questionnaires.

After data collection with the help of questionnaires, data analysis was performed using SPSS software and descriptive statistics (absolute and relative frequency, mean and standard deviation).

Discussion and Conclusion:

In general, in programs held at the three cities, 184 people attended (Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the studied subjects.) 60 percent of nurses were formal employees, 20% treaty employees, 10% initiative employees and 10% contract employees. Also, the maximum and minimum numbers of participants in continuing education programs were in Yasuj (71%) and Dehdasht (25%), respectively.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of samples based on sex, age, work experience, education, workplace and the number of periods

Variable	Demographic Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Sex	Male	5	27.2
	Female	134	72.8
Age Groups	15-20	2	1.1
	21-30	45	24.5
	31-40	116	63
	41-50	21	11.4
Work Experience	5-10	103	56
	11-15	24	13
	16-20	49	26.6
	21-25	4	2.2
	26-30	4	2.2
Education	Associate	17	9.2
	Bachelor	167	90.8
Workplace	Yasuj	71	38.6
	Gachsaran	67	36.4
	Dehdasht	46	25
Number of Periods	1-4	124	67.4
	5-8	51	27.7
	9-12	9	4.9

In the area of program content; conformity with new scientific programs was evaluated high by

60.6 percent of learners in Yasuj, 62.7 percent in Gachsaran and 63 percent in Dehdasht. In this section,

the content appropriateness of programs was evaluated high by 44.7 percent in Yasuj, 56.7 percent in Gachsaran and 63 percent in Dehdasht which has accounts for the maximum points.

In the area of program management; the correct way of holding programs was evaluated high in Yasuj 50.7 percent, in Gachsaran 50.7 percent and in Dehdasht 52.2 percent, and in response to another question of this section about the points allocated to each program, learners evaluated it high in Yasuj 45.1 percent, in Gachsaran 52.2 percent and in Dehdasht 45.7 percent.

In the areas of satisfaction of programs; appropriate time for holding training classes was evaluated high by learners in Yasuj 53.5 percent, in Gachsaran 50.7 percent and in Dehdasht 52.2 percent. In response to a question about appropriate location for classes, learners' answers were high in Yasuj 47.9 percent, in Gachsaran 47.8 percent and in Dehdasht 47.8 percent. About the correct and proper use of training devices, learners' answers were high in Yasuj 46.5 percent, in Gachsaran 49.3 percent and in Dehdasht 47.8 percent. Teachers' scientific mastery was high in Yasuj 49.3 percent, in Gachsaran 41.8 percent and in Dehdasht 45.7 percent.

In the area of motivation; reconsidering previous information was evaluated high by learners in Yasuj 42.3 percent, in Gachsaran 49.3 percent and in Dehdasht 45.7 percent. Also in response to a question about point gathering, learners evaluated it medium in Yasuj 54.9 percent, in Gachsaran 52.2 percent and in Dehdasht 52.2 percent (Table 2.)

51 percent in Yasuj, 53.7 percent in Gachsaran and 54.3 percent in Dehdasht considered workshops as the best way to implement continuing education programs, also, 93 percent in Yasuj, 95.5 percent in Gachsaran and 93.5 percent in Dehdasht considered codified and in-person programs as the best method to implement continuing education programs.

About the content of continuing nursing education programs from the perspective of participants, the results showed that 50.7 percent (36 people) in Yasuj, 50.7 percent (34 people) in Gachsaran and 52.2 percent (24 people) in Dehdasht evaluated the content of programs as medium.

About the management of continuing nursing education programs from the perspective of participants, the results showed that 56.3 percent (40 people) in Yasuj, 59.7 percent (40 patients) in Gachsaran and 56.5 percent (24 people) in Dehdasht evaluated the management programs as medium.

About the satisfaction level of continuing nursing education programs from the perspective of participants, 50.7 percent (36 people) in Yasuj, 50.7

percent (34 people) and in Gachsaran 52.2 percent (24 people) in Dehdasht evaluated it as medium.

About the motivation to participate in continuing nursing education programs from the perspective of participants, the results showed that 54.9 percent (39 people) in Yasuj, 59.7 percent (40 people) in Gachsaran and 60.9 percent (28 people) in Dehdasht evaluated the motivation to participate in continuing nursing education programs as medium.

The results of this study showed that in the area of program content; the participants stated that the content was highly consistent with their job needs. In the study conducted by Zahid Pasha and Canaani (1999) in the city of Babol, 68.1 percent of participants had the same views, which is consistent with the present study (11). Continuing nursing education programs can be part of manpower improvement plans if they are correct, principle and based on staff needs. Perhaps the coordination between continuing nursing education units and nursing offices has made continuing education programs to be compliance with the professional needs of nurses in Kohgiluyeh & Boyerahmad province. In this section, nurses expressed that retraining programs have been highly consistent with new science. This result is inconsistent with the study conducted by Salem Safi et al (2002) in Urmia because the results for GPs in Urmia showed that 77.6% evaluated program success in terms of providing new academic material at a low level (12). Using experienced professors and faculty members and using new and scientific resources have been effective in the success of this sector. Overall assessment of the content of continuing nursing education programs indicates that participants evaluated the content of programs as medium which is consistent with the study conducted by Mohammadi and Dadkhah in Ardebil. Also, participants in the Ardebil continuing nursing education programs have evaluated the content of programs as medium (13.)

In the area of program management; the correct way to hold programs is evaluated by participants as highly favorable, that is consistent with the study conducted by Sadeghi and Bakhshi (2009) in Rafsanjan. Also in Rafsanjan, 30.6% had favorable satisfaction and 69.4% were moderately satisfied and none of doctors in that study were dissatisfied with the quality of programs (14). In response to another question of this section, under the title of points allocated to each program, learners were highly satisfied about the scores assigned to each one-day program (5 points), which is consistent with the study by Yousefi and Rabii (2006) in Golestan province (15). In other studies, participants also wanted a 25-hour program to be divided into 5-hour programs

since this will increase the possibility of participating in programs. It seems that 5-point codified programs are more successful than 25-point codified programs in consolidating previous information and providing new scientific materials due to higher proficiency, presenting material in smaller volumes and in shorter times.

In the area of satisfaction of programs; learners were highly satisfied with the right time and place for holding training classes as well as timely and appropriate use of training devices. This result is consistent the study by Canaani et al (2002) in Yasuj (16). Given the holding time and training plan based on the needs of paramedics participating in these programs, these programs can increase motivation and productivity because according to the law of readiness in learning, attending night classes after work and lack of physical - mental preparation will lead to a severe drop in learning. This is associated with building and equipping conference halls in these three cities which have made good places for participants in retraining programs. Given that personnel retraining program is announced with earlier notice and a codified calendar in the Yasuj University of Medical Sciences, personnel can provide the necessary coordination, the time and place for holding continuing education programs in this province have been satisfactory, and the study results also indicate the same. About the appropriate use of educational tools in the programs implemented, comments have been highly favorable, but according to the study by Mohammadi and Dadkhah (2005) in Ardebil, 54.3 percent of nurses evaluated the way of using training tools as poor. About training on devices and equipments required in the clinical training, the satisfaction level of nurses in Kohkiluyeh & Boyerahmad province has been medium which is consistent with the study by Mohammadi and Dadkhah (2005) in Ardebil. 19.2 percent of Ardebilian nurses declared that the maintenance methods and principles of machinery and equipment are not taught. Also, 43.8 percent expressed that the operation methods of new equipment are not trained because some of continuing education programs require that operation methods of different devices to be trained first and even, for doing the right thing, it is necessary to add maintenance methods of devices and then theoretical and practical training (13). About scientific mastery, learners believed that the teachers' scientific mastery was high which is consistent with the study by Charkazi et al (2009) in Golestan, and the greatest satisfaction of continuing nursing education programs in Golestan is associated with the teachers' scientific mastery (17). In this regard, the cooperation of specialist physicians and faculty members in continuing education

programs are notable which have made the participants more satisfied.

In the area of motivation, learners responded that their motivations were high for reconsidering the previous data and were medium for point gathering. This result is not consistent with the study by VahidShahi et al (2007) in the Mazandran University of Medical Sciences because in that study, 60% of respondents were motivated to participate in retraining by point gathering and 28% by consolidating previous information and obtaining new information (18). In the study by Charkazi et al (2009) in Golestan province, 55.5 percent of participants stated that their most important motivations for participating in continuing education programs are point gathering for employment promotion benefits (super special) and 21.2 percent stated reconsidering previous information. This result is not consistent with the present study (17). Also, in the study conducted by Salem Safi et al (2005) in the Urmia University of Medical Sciences, the point gathering section accounts for the highest percentage which is not consistent with the results of this study (12). However, participation in retraining programs is needed in order to achieve career promotions, many nurses like to get new information in relation to diseases, new devices and so on.

The majority of participants in the three cities stated that the best way for implementing continuing education programs is workshop, and the best method to implement continuing education programs is codified and in-person classes. Also, in the study conducted by Salem Safi et al, participants stated that the best way and method for implementing continuing education programs are workshops, codified and in-person classes. This result is consistent with the results of the present study. More than half of the participants in the three cities have also requested for self-taught through magazines, articles and books (12). As an effective method, online continuing education programs are expanding day by day. It seems that lack of easy access to the Internet among the medical community and lack of online continuing education in Iran have made this method the last priority. Of course, the academic skills that can be achieved with practice and experience are not possible through computers (19).

Overall Conclusion: generally, it is concluded that nurses' views on continuing education programs in Kohkiluyeh & Boyerahmad province in four areas of program content, program management, satisfaction of programs and motivation to participate in continuing education programs were medium, and the majority of nurses stated workshop and in-person methods as the best way for implementing such

programs, and requested for them. It seems that using the results of this study, the authorities of nursing education offices can take effective steps in the design, planning and quality improvement of continuing education programs that will lead to the increased quality of patient care which is the pillar of the nursing profession.

One of the limitations of this study is lack of cooperation of some nursing staff to participate in retraining programs; they could not devote much time to continuing education programs due to the large volume of work and staff shortage.

Suggestions: reducing the working hours of nurses, assigning certain days (a few days in month) to continuing education programs, qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the nurses performance, and involving these valuations in the promotion of nurses can be appropriate solutions for encouraging nurses to participate in continuing education programs. Additionally, it is suggested to do further research such as the present study on other medical staff and to determine and compare the effects of continuing education on them.

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