

The study of nursing students views regarding patients' rights protection (advocacy) and its effective factorsDaryosh Rokhafroz¹, Shayeste Haghighi¹, Somaye Ansari², Neda Sayadi¹¹MSc in nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Ahvaz University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran.²MSc in midwifery, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Ahvaz University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran.
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Abstract: One of the key concepts of nursing is ethics. Nursing students need the opportunity to experience, share and clarify thoughts, feelings and values related to protection of patient. However many challenges were for nursing education to prepare nurses to accept the supportive role of faces. Therefore this study designed to survey of the knowledge nursing student about the rights of patients and patient's advocacy. **Methods:** This study is a descriptive-cross-correlation which conducted on nursing students. For data collection a questionnaire was designed, including Ingram's questionnaire and Demographic questionnaire. Sample size of study based on pilot sampling and sample size estimation was 120 students. For analysis the data used pass statistic software edition 18 descriptive statistic of frequency, and inferential statistics chi-square and variance analysis. **Results:** The findings of this study showed that the mean score of student's knowledge about patient's rights is (54.01±9.59). Also going obtained between scores and course grades (p=0.01) and environment (p=0.01) had a significant relationship, this means that a supportive environment has important effects on patient. Also with increasing semester students were increasing awareness students about patient rights. Conclusion: considering the average score obtained. The student awareness about the rights of patients had moderate. Therefore measures must be thought about more important to teach students.

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1. Introduction

Protection (Advocacy) is one of key concepts in nursing ethics that have been discussed in different texts since 1973. (Vaartio & Leino & Kilpi 2005) There are many ethic codes for nurses, who protect patient's rights (Altun & Ersoy 2003) From Historical aspects the concept of patient advocacy was introduced by "Florence Nightingale" efforts in creating a safe place and clean hospital for patients in "Crimean War". In 1986 care standards in general health sections, hospitals and nursing education facilities resulted in the establishment of American Nurses Association, that this association started to create care standards by using documents like ethic codes that was reviewed in 1976 and part of that included advocacy of patient. (American nurses association 1976 and 2005) The necessity of patient advocacy originated from the effect of illness on the persons independence and their ability to make decisions. The patients often feel powerless in health care environments, so they usually view themselves as extremely vulnerable being. For this, the importance of the nurse's role as an advocate in health care is emphasized very much. (Copp 1986) Most patients show different degrees of vulnerability, depending on the nature of their illness, culture, educational or economic background, personality or prior health care experiences. Therefore, if the human rights and patients welfare be

at risk, it is necessary that a person undertake their protection. (Schroeter 2000). Foley & et al suggested that the patients advocacy is very vital for vulnerable groups such as elders, very young people, people who reside in institutions, prisoners and disabled group (Foley & Minick & Kee 2002) Ingram believed that there are many writing in nursing literature about the subject of patient advocacy, But all of things mentioned doesn't come with experimental evidences. Nurses and care professional members define the advocacy of patient as the process of informing patients who seek health care, but there are still questions about the method of nurses' learning regarding their role in patient protection that have stayed without answer. In fact the researches that performed until now have more concentrated on the definition of advocacy of patient rather than illustrating the process of its learning. For nursing students learning about the role of patient advocacy is a complicated process that has not been defined clearly. Researchers agree that the role of advocacy is necessary for nurses who involved in action. Because the inadequate support of patient can cause devastation for patients and for nurses (Altun & Ersoy 2003) nursing students need an opportunity to experience, process their thoughts, feelings and their values. By increasing information and encountering the concept of patient advocacy, students can understand the importance of patient

protection (Foley & Minick & Kee 2002). However, nursing education faces many challenges in preparing nurses to accept the role of advocacy. In this regard, the survey done by Altun & Ersoy showed that if the training is performed correctly, nursing students will have remarkable preparation to accept the role of advocate for patients. (Altun & Ersoy 2003). In other hand besides the importance of learning process recognition of patient protection, it is also necessary to recognize factors that effect on the advocacy of patients. The result of performed researches showed that personality characteristics such as self-confidence, being optimistic and being innovative are effective on the application of protection. (Rushton & Sellin 1995). Other factors which impress the advocacy of patient are age sex and job security (Rankin & Esteves 1997). Selin believed that problems about job security and managerial challenges are considered as barriers of patient advocacy by nurses (Sellin 1995). Drew states that dissatisfaction from health care system can influence on nurses' motivation to become an advocate for patients. (Drew 1997). In short, with regard to this point that nursing profession is a job in which human rights and ethics are essential points, and the distance between the ethical issues related to this profession and their application is also important, the researcher decided to do this study with the purpose of inspecting nursing students' knowledge about advocacy of human right and related factors, so that by using this research's results, they can give education and necessary measures to the students who still have not started their work in the future work place and to prepare them to do this important action.

2. Methods

This research was a descriptive-cross-sectional correlation study which was conducted on second, third and fourth year nursing students. Collecting data instrument included a questionnaire designed by the researchers that had two parts: (1) demographic data (13 questions) and effective factors on the patient advocacy (13 questions) and (2) the Ingram questionnaire including 28 questions. The manner of scoring of the sections relating to effective factors on the advocacy of patients and also Ingram questionnaire is based on five score likert rate including: completely agree (score:5), agree (score:4), uncertain (score:3), slightly disagree (score:2) and completely disagree (score:1). The Ingram questionnaire score domain was between 28-140 grade, the students who took 0-35 scores from this questionnaire had low awareness, those who took 35-70 scores had an average awareness, Those with 70-105 scores had high awareness and those who

took 105-140 grade had too much awareness about patient rights. The validity of the second part of the questionnaire which was designed by the researchers and Ingram's questionnaire were determined by content validity. Thus after preparation and translation, questionnaire was inspected by fifteen faculty members of Nursing-Midwifery university and after corrective feedback the questionnaire was used. Its reliability also by using split-half and Cronbach's alpha was 0.7.

After explaining the purpose of the study to the students, the data was collected in the classroom. Afterward, the questionnaire was distributed among students and was gathered after their completion. Pilot sampling and sample size calculation method using the formula for estimating, sample size was 120. And the method of sampling was stratified random. For data analysis, descriptive statistics frequency, mean, standard deviation, inferential statistics, chi-square and ANOVA were used. It should be noted that data for this study were significant at $p = 0.05$. Furthermore this study was approved by Ethics Committee of Ahvaz Jundishapur medical science university.

3. Results

The findings of this study showed that the obtained score by using the Ingram questionnaire was between 28-77 and the mean was 54.01 ± 9.59 which showed the average knowledge of students about the patient rights. Also there was a significant relation between the scores resulted from the Ingram questionnaire and semester ($p = 10\%$) and environment ($p = 1\%$). Meaning that high terms students had more knowledge about the patient rights and also these students believed that hospital environment had an important influence on the patient advocacy. Further, in the section of nursing students' views about factors influencing the patient advocacy: the relation between nurse and patient, giving attention to the patient conditions, nurse responsibility, lack of ethical instruction and regulations in patient advocacy, a doctor-dominated community, lack of support for nurses, shortage of time for nurses are among the factors which have important influence on the patient advocacy. Factors such as environment, enough motivation and relationship between personnel and students have high effect on patient advocacy. Student education, previous knowledge about nursing course and being optimistic about future of this job has an average effect on the patient advocacy.

Table 1: Demographic information

age	Below 20 year	16	13.3
	Between 21-30 year	104	86.7
	Above 30 year	0	0
sex	female	88	73.3
	male	32	25.8
marriage	single	100	83.3
	married	20	15.8
Child order in family	first	22	16.7
	middle	67	55.8
	last	32	26.7
semester	third	18	14.2
	forth	22	17.5
	fifth	12	9.2
	sixth	16	12.5
	seventh	25	19.2
	eighth	27	22.5
Record and experience of clinical service	yes	16	12.5
	no	1.4	86.7

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that nursing students have average knowledge about patient rights. The findings of Chafey & et al study which was also done on nurses' knowledge about the advocacy of patient showed that the role of advocacy in the mind of many of answerers was not established as one of the essential roles of nurses. (Chafey & Rhea & Shannon & Spencer 1998) while intelligent research findings showed that nurses have high knowledge (95.5%) about the patient rights (Hoshmand & Jolae & Mehrdad & Bahrani 2006) that perhaps the reason of this difference resulted from different awareness of students regarding nurses working in hospital. The findings of Alton and his colleagues also showed that nursing students have remarkable insight about advocacy of patient rights and are sufficiently ready to advocate the patient and properly acquainted with the needs of responsibility related to this profession which a nurse should be aware of and protect them strongly (Alton & Ersoy 2003) that is different with the findings of this study and perhaps the reason of this difference is training environments and differences in the method of education between these two group of students. Also about the effective factors on the patient advocacy, the finding showed that the relation between a nurse and a patient, paying attention to the patient conditions, nurse responsibility, lack of ethic

instructions and regulation in patient advocacy, a doctor-dominated community, lack of support for nurses, nurses shortage of time are factors which effect patient advocacy greatly and factors like environment, enough motivation, and personnel and students relationship highly effect the patient advocacy. The findings of Negarande & et al also showed that the nurse and patient relationship, recognition and focus on the patients need and nurse responsibility are factors which facilitate the patient advocacy (Negarande & oskoe & ahmadi & nikravesh 2005) that are in the same direction with the findings of this study. Also in the present research being optimistic about the nursing course create an average effect on the patient advocacy that the findings of Rushton, Selin and Rankin study supports this matter. (Rushton 1995 & Sellin 1995 & Rankin & Esteves 1997) Drew believed that dissatisfaction of health care system can be effective on the nurses motivation of the patient advocacy (Drew 1997) while the study of Kobish & et al showed that having positive view and job security are not an effective factors on the patient advocacy (Kubsch & Sternard & Hovarter & Matzke 2004), perhaps the reason of this difference is cultural dissimilarities and exiting differences in the attitudes of nursing course. In this study environment was also recognized as one of the effective factors on the patient advocacy. In this regard the findings of Chafey research also showed that the barriers of work place such as time, budget and the power resulted from hierarchy along with factors like lack of autonomy and tiredness are factors for lack of advocacy. Another effective factor on patient advocacy is the relationship of the nurse and the patient that plays an important role in the patient advocacy and the result of the present research confirms this concept. In this regard, Chafey states that the nurse and the patient relationship apart from ethic matters is the most important part of the patient advocacy process (Chafey & Rhea & Shannon & Spencer 1998) this is according to the findings of this study. Therefore base on our findings and considering this fact that patient advocacy is one of the essential concepts in health care system, and our students have average information regarding this important point and also considering that the nursing students will undertake an important responsibility in the future, assigning only one educational unit as professional ethic to make students aware of this matter seems insufficient. Therefore, considering that in our country and also other countries limited studies were performed on the students and most of the performed studies were on the employed nurses in hospital, it seems necessary that persons in charge make an

Table 2: Distribution of factors that interfere in the patient advocacy, according to the level of influence of each factor in the opinion of nursing students

The effective factors on patient advocacy	very low		Low		moderate		High		Very high	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
The effect of student training on patient advocacy	8	6.7	19	15.8	51	42.5	12	10	30	25
The effect of prior knowledge about nursing course on the patient advocacy	2	1.7	18	15	47	39.2	16	13.3	37	30.8
The effect of environment on patient advocacy	25	20.8	38	31.7	32	26.7	13	10.8	12	10
Being optimistic about the future of job on patient advocacy	11	9.2	30	25	62	51.7	5	4.2	12	9.2
The necessity of enough motivation about patient advocacy	42	35	63	52.5	12	10	2	1.7	1	8
The effect of nurse and patient relationship on patient advocacy	53	44.2	50	41.7	1	11.7	0	0	3	2.5
The necessity of recognition and paying attention to the needs and condition of patient for his advocacy	54	45	50	41.7	16	13.3	0	0	0	0
The necessity of the nurse responsibility for patient advocacy	69	57.5	43	35.8	7	5.8	1	0.8	0	0
Lack of ethic instructions and regulations and their effect on the patient advocacy	55	45.8	39	32.5	23	19.2	1	0.8	2	1.7
The effect of doctor-dominated community on patient advocacy	48	40	35	30	18	15	7	5.8	11	8.3
The effect of lack of support for nurses on patient advocacy	65	54.2	37	30.8	10	8.3	4	3.3	4	2.5
Lack of enough time for nurse and its effect on the patient advocacy	73	60.8	35	24.2	8	6.7	0	0	4	3.3
The effect of relationship between personnel and nursing student on the patient advocacy	50	41.7	55	45.8	11	9.2	2	1.7	2	0.8

F=Frequency

P=Percentage

excess effort to arrange educational workshops in order to introduce the concept of patient advocacy to the students of this course as one of the nursing key concepts and hence create an adequate insight.

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