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Researches in The Eyes of The Users and Obstacles for Conducting Studies in Fields Related to Nursing

Shokoufeh Mogharabi Ostadkalayeh¹, Simin Sharifi^{*2}, Narjes Khatoun Sadeghi googhary², Mehrnaz Bameri³, Najmeh Riahi²

MSc, Department of Nursing, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Zahedan, Iran.

Community Nursing Research Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, IRAN. Iranshahr University of Medical Sciences, Iranshahr, Iran

Corresponding author: *Simin Sharifi, Community Nursing Research Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran.*

ABSTRACT

In spite of many ways to achieve level of mastery is a profession, they all are common in acknowledging knowledge as an essential factor. Conducting research is one of the most reliable and accepted ways to gain the knowledge. The role researcher has been recently confirmed as one of the different roles played by nurses. However, there are evidences that nurses mainly rely on traditional methods rather than academic findings. Statistics show negligence of role of researchers and paucity of such projects in the profession of nursing. The present descriptive-analytical work was conducted to illustrate nurses' perception of the research and obstacles. A case study including nursing staff in hospitals under supervision of Zahedan University of Medical Sciences was studied in the research. Statistic sample was all nurses working in the six hospitals (n=300). A researcher-designed questionnaire was used for data gathering after ascertaining its validity and reliability. For data analyzing descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis and T test were utilized. The results showed that females constitute the majority of nurses (88.6%). participants were at 32.77 (± 6.76) years old with 9.74 (± 7.18) years' experience on average. The main part of activities pertinent to research works by the participants was participation in the Internet training courses. Considering attitudes about research works, the participants were scored 3.7 out of 5 (positive attitude). Significant differences were found in four cases out of five research works, while those participated in research

works showed more positive attitude to research works. Concerning hindrances to research works, more than 70% estimated high rate of problems for carrying out a research job. The most important problems were lack of free time to carry out research activities (83.4%) and responsibilities at work and home (79.6%). Comparison of hindrances based on gender, age, marital status, employment showed some significant differences. The differences were higher among women, staff with temporary work and those who have never participated in research works. The authors found that management of the wards have failed to play a supportive role in research works and more than 70% scored the obstacles ahead of research works between moderate and high. The results heralds nursing education system and managers and hints absence of clinical nursing in research works. There is a threat that nursing might loses its identity as a profession.

Keywords: attitude, research, barrier, nurse

BACKGROUND

Although nursing has been in some of its forms throughout the history, but until the nineteenth century as a discipline and profession has not been proposed. Nursing has started as a newly profession 150 years ago [1]. The name of Florence Nightingale has associated with the science and noble profession. During the nineteenth century around 1850, there was a movement toward the elevation of the status of nursing led by Florence Nightingale [2]. Nightingale explains in his writings that nurses must be able to think critically and what is appropriate and necessary to do for assisting and recovery of patients. She believed that the systematic collection of information and exploring them is imperative for all nurses as researcher role [3, 4]. Due to Nightingale's efforts, nursing respected as a special and integrated discipline. She argued that the care of sick people in the hospital is subtle and important role [5]. Necessity to carry out this study lies with "profession of nursing." In spite of many and sometime different standards introduced for the profession, knowledge is acknowledged by all as the common factor. That is, a systematic academic education is the backbone of a profession [6]. Among different ways to achieve knowledge, research is one of the most reliable and straightforward solutions [7]. However, there are evidences that nurses still use traditional solutions for clinical services [8]. They have close and direct relation with patients so that clinical nurses are the best position to spot potential problems and develop them into research question or theories. However, the fact is many in nursing profession might think the knowledge they develop throughout the job is useless. Computer can aid the nurses to acquire research knowledge, hence it suggested the officials and in charges of departments to plan training program for nurses to improve their perception and knowledge, then computer and information literacy are critical for future of nursing [9,10, 11].

This trend may eventuate in remedies and beliefs with their logical reason faded away throughout the ages and even some rejected by new findings [4, 5]. Official task definition for the profession of nursing in Iran clearly expresses research works and cooperation in such works essential for development of nursing services quality [12]. Taking

into account importance of the profession, this study deals with determination of attitudes of clinical nurses toward research work and obstacles ahead of research works. The results might be helpful for further initiatives for changing the attitudes and dealing with the obstacles. Consequently, nurses may offer better services and follow academic and documented procedures in their work. The aim of this research is exploring of researches in the eyes of the users and obstacles for conducting studies in fields related to nursing.

METHODS

Design, sample, and setting

As a descriptive and analytical work, attitudes of nursing staff in Zahedan-based hospitals regarding research works and obstacles ahead of such works were surveyed. Study society and sample was comprised of all clinical nursing staff in six hospitals subsidiary to Zahedan University of Medical Sciences (n = 300). Where the returned questionnaires were not filled out completely and properly or the related ward was not cooperative, the participants were removed from the study group. Sampling was conducted through census and all nurses working in the hospital were considered in the process. Three hundred questionnaires were handed out and 256 were returned (13 rejected). Return rate of the questionnaire was 85.33%. The questionnaire was comprised of 3 sections. Section one, including 14 questions was on personal information and research record. The second section with 18 questions designed based on Likert Scale (quite agree, agree, have not opinion, disagree, quite disagree) dealt with attitudes, and the third section with 25 questions (very high, high, average, low, never) was about obstacles ahead of research work. The questionnaire was provided to experts and competent scholars to ascertain its validity. Considering reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha obtained for the obstacles and attitudes were 0.84 and 0.73 respectively.

Ethical considerations

The subjects were informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was assured and communicated verbally at the time of data collection. Written permission for gathering data in hospitals was obtained.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to organize and describe the data. Depend on kind of data; they were analyzed by ANOVA, Mann-Whitney -U and Kruskal-Wallis and T tests. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. Attitude points >3.5 = positive, >2.5 = relatively positive and <2.5 = negative were considered.

RESULTS

According to the results, the majority of female (88.6%) staff nurses (79.6%). Their average age was 32.77 (± 6.76) and the rate of their work experience was 9.74 (± 7.18). Main research activity which nurses had participated was "The Internet course," and "attendance in research conferences out of Zahedan city in last year" was the least

activity. The result regarding the participants' attitude about the research was 3.7 out of 5. Highest rate of agreement was about the term "studying research materials must be in daily schedule" (93.6%) and the highest rate of disagreement (quite disagree and disagree) was about the term "With high rate of research in related fields in developed countries, there is no need to carry out such works in Iran" (72%). In addition, the highest rate of neutral idea (not agree nor disagree) was "experience is more important than research" (40.7%). There was no significant difference in attitudes based on personal specifications. Regarding the five research activities, comparing the mean of the total attitude showed significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in 4 cases. The more positive attitude was found among the nurses who attended in *research method* and *Internet teaching course and research conference in Zahedan city during last year* and those who had *conducted a research plan* or *cooperated in a research plan*. More than 70% of nurses evaluated barriers very high and high (83.4%-64%). The most important limitations were "lack of free time to do research activities" (83.4%) and "having job and family responsibilities" (79.6%). Comparing the rate of research limitation based on sex, age, marital status, employment status, and rate of doing research activities disclosed some significant differences ($p < 0.05$). The differences were more intensified among women, staff with temporary employment, and those with no experience in research works.

Table-1: Frequency of research activities by the nurses

Research activities	Yes		No	
	Number	percentage	Number	percentage
1. Attendance in research method courses.	92	42/6	124	57/4
2. Attendance in the Internet training courses.	134	59/0	93	41/0
3. Attendance in research conferences in Zahedan (last year).	104	46/0	122	54/0
4. Attendance in research conferences in other cities.	38	17/5	179	82/5
5. Carrying out or cooperating in research works.	55	26/7	151	73/3

Table-2: Attitude of participants (number/percentage)

Statement	Quite agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Quite disagree	mean	SD
	Percentage (number)						
Studying research results must be in daily schedule of nurses	(102)44	(115)49/6	(12)5/2	(2)0/9	(1)0/4	4/35	0/66
One can be a good nurse and good researcher	(116)49/8	(96)41/2	(12)5/2	(8)3/4	(1)0/4	4/42	0/97
Experiment is more important than research	(39)19/1	(46)22/5	(83)40/7	(34)16/7	(2)1/0	2/58	1/01
with high rate of research works in developed countries in nursing field, there is no need to carry out research work in Iran	(15)6/6	(24)10/5	(25)11/0	(121)53/1	(43)18/9	3/1/67	1/1

Table-3: Frequency of obstacles ahead of research activities

Obstacles	Very high	High	Average	Low	None
	Percentage (number)				
<i>Lack of enough time</i>	(122)53/0	(70)30/4	(22)9/6	(12)5/2	(4)1/7
<i>Poor English language</i>	(88)38/3	(84)36/5	(37)16/1	(19)8/3	(2)0/9
<i>Tight schedule at work and home</i>	(100)43/5	(83)36/1	(33)14/3	(11)4/8	(3)1/3
<i>Poor public relation of researcher nurses as research consultants</i>	(67)29/8	(95)42/2	(46)20/4	(10)4/4	(7)3/1
<i>Lack of decent relation between academic society</i>	(89)39/4	(83)36/7	(37)16/4	(12)5/3	(5)2/2

<i>and nurses for conducting research</i>					
<i>Absence of research activities in work schedule of nurses</i>	(95)42/4	(81)36/2	(36)16/1	(11)4/9	(1)0/4
<i>Lack of knowledge regarding role of a nurse as a researcher</i>	(69)30/4	(104)45/8	(41)18/1	(11)4/8	(2)0/9
<i>Lack of knowledge regarding bureaucracy for carrying out a research work</i>	(71)31/0	(103)45/0	(40)17/5	(11)4/8	(4)1/7
<i>Intangibility of the results by previous researches</i>	(70)31/0	(100)44/2	(47)20/8	(6)2/7	(3)1/3
<i>Lack of supportive policies for research activities</i>	(80)35/6	(72)32/0	(46)20/4	(17)7/6	(10)4/4
<i>No financial benefits</i>	(86)37/6	(68)29/7	(50)21/8	(17)7/4	(8)3/5
<i>No access to new academic materials (magazines, books, etc.)</i>	(60)26/4	(89)39/2	(47)20/7	(24)10/6	(7)3/1
<i>Lack of resources (financial, facilities, equipment)</i>	(82)35/8	(84)36/7	(42)18/3	(17)7/4	(4)1/7
<i>Lack of researcher nurse prototype</i>	(85)37/0	(70)30/4	(49)21/3	(17)7/4	(9)3/9
<i>lack of research priorities</i>	(60)26/4	(101)44/5	(45)19/8	(19)8/4	(2)0/9

Table-4: Average total point based on research activities of nurses

<i>Research activities</i>	yes		no		<i>t-test</i>
	<i>mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	
1. Attendance in research method courses.	68/59	7/48	64/90	8/73	0/01
2. Attendance in the Internet training courses.	67/44	7/98	65/01	8/81	0/01
3. Attendance in research conferences in Zahedan (last year).	69/18	6/71	64/45	9/19	0/001
4. Attendance in research conferences in other cities.	67/75	7/50	65/99	8/59	0/25

5. Carrying out or cooperating in research	69/45	7/26	64/98	8/64	0/01
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Table 5: Intensity of obstacles for carrying our research based on personal specifications and research activities

Obstacles	Variables		mean	Standard deviation	p-value
Intangibility of the results by previous researches	Age	≤ 29	2.63	(0.57)	P<0.01
		30-39	2.67	(0.54)	
		≤ 40	2.57	(0.71)	
Tight schedule at work and home	Gender	Female	2.77	(0.52)	P<0.01
		Male	2.42	(0.83)	
Lack of supportive policies for research activities		Female	2.58	(0.66)	P<0.05
		Male	2.21	(0.88)	
Tight schedule at work and home	Marital status	Unmarried	2/55	(0.67)	P<0.001
		Married	2/81	(0.49)	
Lack of support from top management	Employment status	Temporary Contract	2/60	(0/67)	P<0.01
		temporary as "human resources project"	2/25	(0/76)	
		Permanent	2/41	(0/73)	
		Temporary Contract	2/78	(0/42)	P<0.01
		temporary as "human resources project"	2/80	(0/49)	
		Permanent	2/61	(0/58)	
Intangibility of the results by previous researches					
No financial benefits	Participate in research method	Yes	2.32	(0.78)	P<0.05
		No	2.73	(0.53)	

<i>Lack of general acceptance of research role for a nurse among colleague</i>	<i>courses</i>	<i>Yes</i>	2.38	(0.73)	<i>P<0.05</i>
		<i>No</i>	2.67	(0.61)	
<i>Lack of supportive policies for research activities</i>		<i>Yes</i>	2.38	(0.75)	<i>P<0.05</i>
		<i>No</i>	2.61	(0.64)	
<i>Tight schedule at work and home</i>	<i>Carrying out or cooperating in a research project</i>	<i>Yes</i>	2.58	(0.69)	<i>P<0.05</i>
		<i>No</i>	2.77	(0.53)	

DISCUSSION

Surveys of research works by the nurses showed that 42.6% of the staff had participated in Research Method Workshops. This figure was reported by Geumo (2008), Niederhauser (2005), Tsai (2000), Aminizade (1990), and Sharifi (2005) equal to 55.6%, 95.4%, 45%, 57.5%, and 59.7% respectively. Our results in this regard are consistent with other works, though quality of the workshops were not equal. [13, 15-18].

Fifty-nine percent of the nurses in the study participated in the Internet training courses, while Sharifi reported this activity equal to 23.7% [13]. This factor was not reported in other studies. The reason, probably, is common usage of the Internet in other countries. Apparently, half of the nurses in the hospitals participated in the courses.

Rate of participation in research conferences held in the city and out of the city was 46% and 17.5% respectively. Moreover, majority of research activities (conducting a research or cooperating in) comprises 24.7 of research works. Apparently, the nurses participated mainly on inter-organizational studies, which are for sake of promotion in the job and other allowances. In fact, such research works are not acceptable as an academic work. In the other hand, it is noticeable that by its nature and by the fact that majority of nurses are women, the job is an illustration of female behavior and public image of a nurse is a kindhearted woman nurse who only follow physician's directions. This image is also privilege among patients and nurses and the idea is promoted by training bodies. On the other hand, as a logical, explicit, qualitative, and accurate process, research process is considered as a men's job [19]. This general belief might be a reason for paucity of research activities among the nurses.

Surveys on nurses' attitude regarding research works showed that participants, on average, were scored 3.7 out of 5 (positive attitude). Consistently, this factor in other works by Kuuppelomaki&Tumi (2004) was obtained 2.84 (out of 4), Eller et al. (2003) and Wallin et al. (2003) 80%-90% (positive attitude), Yates et al. (2002), Bjorkstrom& Harmin (2001), Parahoo (1998), Mc Sherry (1997) 61.9% (positive attitude), and similarly by Hicks (1996), Aminizade (1990), and Mehrdad et al. (2007) [27,18,8,26,25,24,23,22,21,20,34,33,35]. Although, measures of attitudes were not the same in different words, all confirm the results obtained in this work. In fact, the positive

attitude toward research among the nurses lies with their interests in such works, though this result should be evaluated with cautious. There is a probability that the participants have tried to give generally accepted answers. That is, due to many concerns, the participants might have concealed their true attitudes. [26, 28]. On the other hand, it is noticeable that positive attitude does not necessarily result in action, though it is essential. [29, 14].

Further analyses showed that highest rate of agreement (quite agree and agree) was given to question, "Studying researches' results pertinent to nursing must be in daily schedule" (93.9%). This result was consisted with that by Bjorkstrom & Harmin (2001), Hundley (2000) [30, 31, 24].

Moreover, 91% of the participants were agreed with the term "a good nurse can be a good researcher" and 89.7% with the term "participation in research method workshops is essential". The results also showed that the clinical nurses are aware of role of research projects and necessity of research methods courses."

The participants were mostly inconsiderate (have not opinion) about the term "experience is more important than research" (40.7%). Apparently, the participant have failed to achieve a balance between academic viewpoint (research is more important than experience) and traditional viewpoint (experience is more important than research). This implies that despite general awareness of the role of researches in nursing profession, there are still strong ties with traditional beliefs.

The highest rate of disagreement (quite disagrees and disagrees) was for the term "with high rate of research works in developed countries in nursing field, there is no need to carry out research work in Iran" (72%). It appears that the participants are quite aware that researches in developed countries might not answer clinical challenges in Iran.

Concerning the term "determination of obstacles ahead of research works" more than 70% of respondents evaluated the obstacles very high or high (64%-83.4%). The most prominent obstacles were "lack of time" and "tight schedule at home and at work" 83.4% and 79.6% respectively. Sabzevari et al. (2000) argued that "tight business" was the main obstacle (2.47 out of 3 on average); Niederhauser & Kohr (2005) argued that "lack of time" was the main obstacle [16, 31, 32]. In spite of similarities between our questionnaire and those used in other works, the obstacles in our work were scored higher than that of other works.

It must be pointed out that Niederhauser & Kohr study was conducted in the USA as one of pioneer countries of modern nursing movement with longer history of nursing than Iran. On the other hand, differences regarding the obstacles in the present work and the other works might be due to differences in education level. The priority of variable of problems and barriers against learning

Clinical skills and training according to nursing students respectively including student's dissatisfaction with method of presentation of practical and theoretical lessons as the first priority, problems and barriers and characteristics of instructors as the second priority and the relationship among instructor and student as the last priority with problems and barriers [32]. All the participants in had BSc of nursing, while about 97% of participants in other works had

M.A or higher degrees. Moreover, emphasize on research works, access to resources (financial, human force, academic) differs between different education systems. In addition, carrying out research works is part of task definition of university professors [31], while it is not the same for clinical nurses. One reason is that ruling culture in the hospital is performance-oriented, as the organization needs to cover the costs, which is definitely in controversy with nature of research works. Another factor causing poor research works in hospital setting is the hospital working system as nurses are not expected to carry out research work and carrying of clinical services is the main task. This is while, carrying out researches activities is pointed out in nurses' task definition, there is no executive guarantee, and the required conditions (free time, access to recent nursing academic resources, and financial support) are not provided.

No significant difference in attitude was found based on personal specifications. This is inconsistent with other researches showed that the older the participant, the more positive attitude toward research works [14, 18,23,24]. The inconsistency might be due to differences in research method courses, clinical/education environment, and degree of the participants. For instance, in a study study that sample was academic members significant differences was found between age and attitude; but in another research on clinical nurses, significant differences were not found between age, work experience and attitude toward research activities [27]. Probably, Research Methods course as an approved course in bachelor of nursing syllable has failed to develop a positive attitude toward research works among younger nurses. Comparison of total mean of attitude based on five research activities, significant differences was obtained in four activities. This is consistent with Lacey (1994), Bjorkstrom& Harmin (2001), Yates et al. (2003), Adamsen et al. (2003), Valin et al. (2003), and Aminizade (1990) [18, 22,26,36,37]. The results showed that participants who attended Research Method course, Internet Course, and province research conference or participated in research works, have more positive attitudes toward research works.

There were some significant differences between perceived research obstacles and gender, age, marital status, and employment status. Female, staff nurses who had temporary work, and staff with no record of research works reported obstacles with high intensity. Apparently, women's role at home causes more obstacles for female staff to participate in research works. One explanation is that women still have their traditional role at home even now that they work outside the house. The nurses and students have to educate about research process and educational program as workshop must be perform [38, 39].

Staff with permanent employment condition reported fewer obstacles than those who had temporary employment contract. This result might be due to tighter schedule, less experiences in research works, lack of knowledge of important organizational relations among the staff with temporary work. In comparing barriers scores and research activity, nurses who did not attain in research activities, reported barriers with more intensity than nurses who attained in five research activity, which may be due to lack of knowledge about research process or low self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

We found in majority of the cases (4 out of 5) less than half of the nurses had participated in research activities. The participants showed positive attitude toward research and no significant differences were found between attitude to research and demographic characteristics. Obstacles for carrying out research activities were reported high and very high (64-83.4%) by more than 70% of the participants. In comparing scores of barriers for implementing research and demographic characteristics significant differences were found based on age, and employment condition. We found that females and staff with temporary work contracts reported higher rate of obstacles. Comparison between obstacles ahead of research and research activities revealed significant differences in some cases; staff with no research experience reported higher rate of barriers.

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