

To Evaluate For the Improvement of the Clinical Supervision in Nursing

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The aim of this study was to improve the quality of the supervision course accomplished in Escola Superior de Enfermagem de São João (ESEnf SJ). In nursing, supervision is considered indispensable in the road for the quality of teaching and the practices. Studies have shown that nurses with postgraduate education in teaching and counselling describe themselves as more effective and competent than those without it. In agreement with the obtained results in this study, the course influenced the development of mentor's competences in the nurses that accomplished it.

1. Introduction

In an era that it is sought the quality unceasingly —quality of the water that we drink, of the air that we breath, of the food that we eat, of the products that we produce and we consume, of the services that we render and receive— one cannot stop speaking about supervision, because it seeks, without a doubt, to assure the quality.

Nowadays, the investment in the clinical supervision in nursing is, also, considered indispensable, in the sense of assuring a solid road in the path of the quality of the teaching and of the professional exercise. It is important to the nurses implicated in the teaching, in practices of care and in the management of units and institutions [1].

The curriculum of the nursing courses includes a variety of learning contexts that range from the theoretical sessions, theoretical-practices and practices in laboratory to the clinical experience (clinical teaching), being this one of the fundamental components of the curriculum.

The clinical area is a field of professional action where knowledge is created, tested and applied, and the effects monitored and evaluated.

The learning in clinical context always presupposes a cognitive activity, mediated by factors of cultural, situational, psychological and biological order. The student learns when he integrates the information and is capable to develop an action in an evaluation and control context.

For Schön [2] the field of the practices is understood as a space of development of technical and no technical competences, in a context of tensions between the technical rationality and the practical rationality. Schön considers, still, that the learning process is dependent of two dynamics:

- the deconstruction of the problem, and
- the intelligibility of the phenomenon

The dialoguing reflection is the key process that turns possible both phenomena and that simultaneously leads to the active construction of the knowledge, in the context of the action, through out a methodology of learning to do by doing.

In the clinical teaching, the students' supervision (mentorship) should be noticed as a process in that a teacher, or experienced professional, supports, guides, helps to reflect and advises a student in the construction of his knowledge, having in mind the ecology of the situations.

The mentor needs to enjoy teaching and assessing in order to perform it well. The supervision function should take to the creation of learning opportunities, around values, conventions, knowledges and thought and action outlines, owing the mentor the responsibility to identify the competences that each context allows to develop in the way to select the most appropriate strategies to the learning of the students.

In the selection of strategies, the mentor should always have in mind the level of the student's development, in order to select those that allow reach him a level of higher development.

Being a mentor involves understanding and making judgments about the decisions and actions of others within particular context. The evaluation should be used as a teaching strategy. We don't develop without evaluation. Assessment should be the two way learning process for the student and the mentor, she should detach the strong and positive aspects of the learning and of the educational activities. The mentor, when he evaluates the student's development is also evaluating the effectiveness of his role as an educator.

Face to the inherent difficulties to the problem of the supervision, mainly in what it respects to the lack of education/preparation of the tutors that collaborate with the teachers of the Nursing College of São João (ESEnf SJ) in the students' clinical attendance, this institution decided to integrate an European project, in the extent of the Leonardo of Vinci Program" Learning During Education and in the Clinical Field", Project Number: N/O/B/PP-165.010. Being one of the objectives of the partners of this Project (Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Poland, United Kingdom and Sweden), to develop a common nucleus of an education model in clinical supervision in nursing.

The participation of the School in this project coincided with the beginning of the debate of the problem of the clinical supervision in Portugal, discussion a lot actual and traverse to many other countries in Europe.

In our country, one of the slopes of the discussion is centred in the students' supervision in clinical teaching (mentorship), where the mentors' specific formation is assumed as central concern, at level of the nursing schools, and at level of the institutions of health where is developed the clinical teaching. The scientific production has revealed that the clinical supervision has direct benefits on the supervised/students [3], then, it turns fundamental a mentors' appropriate education, because competent mentors are more qualified to stimulate the students' critical thought, contributing like this, for a better integration of the theory within the practice.

In the extent of this project ESEnf SJ accomplished a Post Graduated Course in Clinical Supervision in Nursing (CPGSCE). To draw the curriculum of the course grew in all of the participant countries an investigation study with the objective of evaluating the defined needs for the mentor as influencers of the development of competences and supervision capacities.

CPGSCE elapsed in the scholar year of 2004-2005, along two semesters, and had a total of 600 hours:

- The first semester, with a theoretical component of 300 hours, distributed by four areas-clinical Supervision, Pedagogy, Communication and Relationship and Evaluation;
- The second semester, with the Theoretical-practice (Seminars) and Practice (Clinical Teaching) components, in a total of 300 hours -Seminars, Clinical Teaching

2. Study framework

Aim of the study: To improve the quality of the supervision course accomplished in ESEnf SJ

Objective: Nurse's self-evaluation of their development as mentors following participation in the course

Study type: Descriptive and exploratory character

Collection of data

To collect the necessary data for the study, a questionnaire was built with open, mixed and closed questions.

The questions were intended to collect data for the characterization of the sample (age, sex, number of years of professional exercise, workplace and number of work hours) and about knowledge, capacities and abilities to accomplish students' supervision (to plan, to guide, to support and to do summative and formative evaluation of the students) after the conclusion of the course.

This questionnaire was elaborated by all the representatives of the countries involved in the project (www.clinicalmentorship.org), and was applied at the end of the course - Mars, 2005.

Sample

All the students that finished CPGSCE represented the sample

Characterization of the sample

- Nurses: 14, being 92,9% general nurses and 7,1% specialist nurses
- Age between 23 and 50 years (Chart n° 1)
- Gender: 71,4% women and 28,6% men
- Workplace: 85,7% hospital and 14,3% health centre (Chart n° 2)
- Inexperienced in students' supervision: 7,1%

Chart n°1 – Age of participants

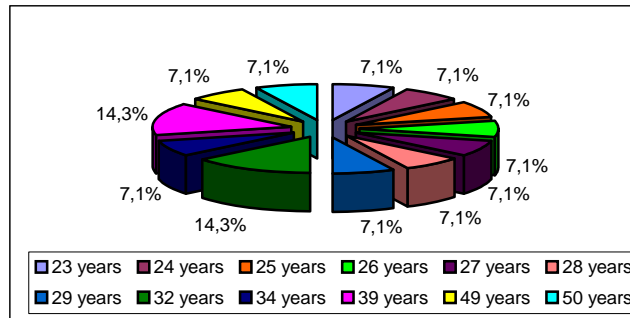
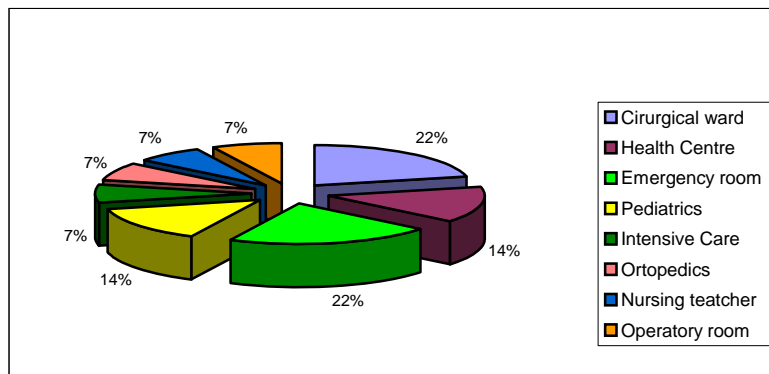


Chart n° 2 – Workplace of participants



In the beginning of the course, nurses mentioned the following motivations for the attendance: to improve the acting as students' supervisor; to develop competences in the area of students' supervision; to fill the flaws felt in the acting of students' orientation; to acquire knowledge on planning, guiding and evaluating the students in clinical teaching; to develop critical-reflexive thought; to deepen knowledge in

the area of the pedagogic education; to be responsible for the education in wards and professional valorisation.

3. Results

The majority of the students (85,7%) assess their knowledge and skills related to planning and giving reasons for mentorship as good and 14,3% as very good.

Relatively to the knowledge and ability to provide mentorship 92,9% considered it good and 7,1% very good. All of the students affirm that have good knowledge about formative assessment, 7,1% consider that have good knowledge about summative assessment, while most of them (92,9%) says that had some knowledge.

In what respects to the extent that the programme has increased the understanding of mentorship related to professional subject area and functions, 71,4% affirm that increased very much and 28,6% increased.

On programme influence on development of abilities to reflect critically on own values, attitudes and skills as a mentor, 92,9% says that had a very good influence and 7,1% a good influence.

Relatively to what extent has the programme increased their understanding as a mentor of the relationship between theory and practice, 53,8% think that it had some influence and 46,2% that it didn't influence anything.

On programme's influence on development of mentorship competency, increase of self-efficacy, the participants' sense of responsibility and creative ability in practice, 64,3% answer that it had a very good influence and 35,7% a good influence.

In what extent has the programme increased their insight in teaching and learning methods, the majority (57,1%) answered that it increased, 28,6% increased very much and 14,3% had some increase.

On how did they assess their knowledge related to development of learning goals, the majority (78,6%) referred a good understanding and 21,4% a very good understanding.

On How did they assess their ability to guide students towards achievement of their learning goals, the majority (71,4%) considered having good ability and 28,6% very good ability.

On what extent has the programme developed their ability to reflect critically over own role in assessment and evaluation situations, 64,3% answered a good development and 35,7% a very good development.

On what extent has the programme developed their ability to reflect critically over their role in situations of conflict related to assessment and evaluation, 78,6% answered some development and 21,4% no development.

About their assessment of understanding the professional and pedagogical aspects of mentorship related to assessment and evaluation, the majority (78,6%) answered having some understanding and 21,4% no understanding.

Relatively to what extent has the programme increased their insight into alternative methods of assessment and evaluation, 14,3% considered that had insight increment, 57,1% had a good insight, and 28,6% a very good one.

4. Conclusion

Courses traditionally use student feedback to monitor their quality [4].

The results obtained in our study relatively to the importance of the education in supervision for the development of the mentorship role are in agreement with the bibliography that refers that nurses with postgraduate education in teaching and counselling describe themselves more effective and competent than those without [5, 6].

In our study more than 50% of the attendants refer that the programme influenced their development of abilities to reflect critically on own values, attitudes and skills to mentor, mentorship competency and increase of self-efficacy, sense of responsibility and creative ability in practice and understanding of assessment and evaluation of students learning outcomes; what allows us also to conclude that the used

teaching/learning strategies were appropriated. The attendants said also that this course was an important reference in their own education and influenced in the positive way their rolls as mentors.

Discrepancy between theory and practice has long been a source of concern to teachers, practitioners and learners. It deeply rooted in the history of nurse education. Theory-practice gap has been recognised goes over 50 years in nursing [7].

In agreement with the obtained results the teaching about the articulation between theory and practice should be more explored and deepened. In future courses it is fundamental to reflect on this aspect, once the discrepancy between the theory and the practice has been a problem evidenced by the mentorship as one of the aspects considered fundamental for the success / unsuccess of the education devices and supervision in clinical teaching [8, 9,10,11].

The summative evaluation is pointed by the mentor as one of the largest difficulties in the exercise of his function, actually, the assessment of practice raises a number of problems that do not arise when attending the theoretical elements of the course. Friedländer says that “the difficulty lives, so much in psychological reasons, as in methodological causes. Nobody likes to be evaluated because is afraid of facing their limitations or weak points and, therefore, the evaluation invariably produces resistance feelings, in an explicit or implicit way. It is also very difficult to do judgements, because all of us are afraid of committing errors and injustices” [12].

Also, in our study the results took us to conclude that students' summative evaluation in clinical teaching should be more explored and deepened. In future courses, these aspects should be more trained in order to over cross one of the most common problems in the nursing students' supervision.

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