Student Nurse Reflection on the Importance of the EPICC Competency

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Abstract

Background to reflection:
The subject of spirituality and religion in care has dominated discussions in the care sector in the last few decades. These discussions border largely on the perceived benefits of religion and spirituality in healthcare in general with particular reference to nursing. Nurses care competencies so far have largely centred around the care for peoples physical and mental illness with little or no emphasis on the spiritual component of individuals. Previous studies have noted the importance of a formal spiritual care education for nurses (Timmins, 2013) and established a correlation between spirituality/religion and wellness/recovery (Koenig 2004 and 2012). It is in the light of the foregoing that the importance of the EPICC competencies for spiritual care is considered in this work.

Aims and Objectives:
This piece aims to demonstrate the importance of spiritual competency in nursing training and how these could positively impact on clinical outcomes. As Vance (2001) and Ronaldson et al (2012) put it, spiritual competency in nursing education would eliminate the barriers nurses face in the provision of spiritual care.

Theoretical Perspectives/Methodology:
The current spirituality and healthcare model in healthcare systems around the world presuppose spirituality as a specialist skill. Radford (2008) argued that the current system under the chaplaincy model might be insufficient at meeting the spiritual needs of patients especially given that it mostly derives from the traditional Judeo Christian ethos. Similarly, McSheery (2006a) argue in favour of nurses as being vital in the spiritual care provision in conjunction with chaplains. Studies over the years report the need for nurses to possess the competency to provide spiritual support to patients. The EPICC competencies launched in 2018 seeks to address this deficit in nurse education and training.

Conclusion and Implications:
Spiritual/religious expressions can be important aspects of the human individuals and more so in moments of ill health. The adoption of the EPICC competencies in every nursing curriculum, would ensure a cohort of future nurse practitioners who are capable of providing evidence based spiritual care. Lastly, this presentation aims to discuss and debate the implications of this implementation from a new graduate nurse perspective.