Educating student nurses to provide spiritual care in a changing religious landscape

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Abstract
The 2016 census (Central Statistics Office, 2016) shows a changing religious landscape in Ireland. In addition to the decline of Roman Catholicism there is a growing diversity of religious practice within the country. Furthermore, there are a growing number of citizens identifying as having 'no religion' (rise to 9.8% of the population). This presentation will engage with this changing religious landscape and its implication in relation to the role of spirituality in healthcare provision.

Research demonstrates the importance of the role of spirituality in the healthcare setting (Freeman, 2005; Gilbert, 2011; Barber & Wilson, 2015; Public Health England, 2015; Mental Health Commission, 2008). Furthermore, the production of a guide to aid staff working in the HSE is acknowledgement that there is a need to provide direction to staff in relation to their interactions with different faith and cultural perspectives (HSE, 2009).

In A Question of Faith (HSE, 2011) a number of barriers to the provision of spiritual care where identified, these include the lack of uniformity in assessment, lack of time, clinical factors and the idea that faith/spirituality is a ‘private matter’. Furthermore, Allen (2010) identifies cross-cultural education and anti-racism as necessary aspects of nurse training if improvement in staff competency in providing spiritual and religious care is to be realised. In light of these observations this discussion paper will ask a number of key questions. What resources are available to support the education of students? What can be learned from resources being used in other jurisdictions? How could these be integrated into current undergraduate provision?