RESEARCH ABSTRACT SAMPLE – 274 Words

Graduate Nursing Students’ Knowledge and Attitudes Related to Depression in Older Adults: Implications for Holistic Nursing

Background: Depression is a major public health problem prevalent in older adults, especially in those with chronic illness. It is the most common psychiatric disorder in older adults and is associated with serious and costly outcomes. Nurses now care for an increasing number of elderly patients with chronic diseases, and a high proportion of these elderly have depressive symptoms. Consequently, there is a critical need to educate nurses in best practices related to depression screening and interventions for older adults.

Aims and Objectives: The primary objective was to evaluate graduate nurses’ knowledge of evidence-based assessment and intervention principles for depressed older adults. Secondary aims were to identify nurses’ depression-related educational needs, and to use study findings to develop a holistic educational program.

Description and Evaluation: A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study. Nursing students (n=60) were recruited from a large university. A survey consisting of a 20-item knowledge questionnaire along with an appraisal of the self-perceived attitudes and confidence of students towards depressed older adults was administered to participants, and an open-ended question determined participants’ needs for further education. Nurses’ scores demonstrated a 79.6% knowledge level in geriatric depression. Nurses scored lowest on knowledge related to prevalence, screening, and debilitating diagnostic features of depression. Only 12.5% of nurses rated their confidence level as high in caring for depressed elders.

Conclusion and Implications: Findings from this study and the proposed holistic management model can be used to develop educational programs to enhance nurse’s awareness of the relationship between holistic practice and the sacred flow of life.