

FACTORS INFLUENCING ABSENTEEISM AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN THE COLLEGE OF NURSING NISHTER MEDICAL UNIVERSITY MULTAN

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Abstract: *This study aimed to evaluate the prevalence of absenteeism in nursing colleges and identify the factors leading to it. A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in the Nursing Department of Nishtar Medical University, Multan, from December 2022 to February 2023. A total of 130 female BSN nursing students were included in the study. The students were instructed to fill out a questionnaire designed using the Likert scale. The questionnaire included a set of multiple-choice questions which could be answered by selecting strongly agreed, partially agreed, partially disagreed, neutral, partially disagreed, or strongly disagree. The participants were aged from 18 years to 28 years. 41% agreed to be absent from classes and clinical postings, indicating a high frequency of absenteeism. Among the factors influencing absenteeism, 52 participants (40%) agreed that the lack of resources for transport to college was the major cause of absenteeism. A high prevalence of absenteeism is observed among nursing students, with a lack of transportation facilities being the major issue.*

Keywords: Nursing, Absenteeism, Students, Likert Scale

Introduction

Absenteeism is a major issue in educational systems, but its effects on nursing are deleterious. This continues to be a challenge for nursing colleges, but leaders are working to find innovative ways to support and address individual and college-wide absenteeism issues (Magobolo and Dube, 2019).

Absenteeism reports a student missing more than 10% of academic instruction due to unexcused or excused absences (Randa, 2020). The high absenteeism rate among nursing college students can be attributed to various factors, including a lack of necessary resources like transportation, financial support, etc., a shortage of educational staff, and limited opportunities for hands-on learning and practical experience. Additionally, students may be absent due to personal reasons such as illness, family emergencies, court directives, and weather-related or transportation issues (Adetoun and Oluwatosin, 2020; Cheema and Iqbal, 2018; Gohar et al., 2021).

Absenteeism in nursing students can be a significant concern, negatively impacting their ability to learn and retain the necessary knowledge and skills. It can also cause delays in completing the nursing program and graduating (Kumar et al., 2022).

Absenteeism, or frequently missing work or school, can negatively affect nursing colleges. Some potential effects include financial burdens, reduced learning

opportunities, disruption to class flow, decreased morale, poor academic performance, and decreased clinical experience (Rahman and Kausar, 2021). Nursing colleges must address absenteeism to mitigate these negative effects and promote the well-being of their students and faculty.

This study was conducted to evaluate the prevalence of absenteeism in nursing colleges and identify the factors leading to it.

Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in the Nursing Department of Nishtar Medical University, Multan, from December 2022 to February 2023. A total of 130 female BSN nursing students were included in the study. The students of post-RN and non-consented participants were excluded from the study. All the participants provided their consent to become a part of the study.

The students were instructed to fill out a questionnaire designed using the Likert scale. The questionnaire included a set of multiple-choice questions which could be answered by selecting strongly agreed, partially agreed, neutral, partially disagreed, or strongly disagree. The questionnaire was divided into questions about the participants' demographics,

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frequency of absenteeism, and factors influencing absenteeism.

All the data was evaluated by SPSS version 26 and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive data, including age and academics, were presented as percentages and frequency.

Results

The participants were aged from 18 years to 28 years. 80 (61%) respondents were younger than 20 years, 25 (19.9%) were aged between 21 and 23 years, 24 (18.8%) were from the age group 24-27, and only one

respondent (1.3%) was 28 years old. 40 (31%) of participants were from BSN generic 1st year, 30 (23%) from BScN Generic 2nd year, 30 (23%) from BScN Generic 3rd year BSc degree and BScN Generic 4th year having 30 (23%) (Table I).

41% agreed to be absent from classes and clinical postings, indicating a high frequency of absenteeism (Table II). Among the factors influencing absenteeism, 52 participants (40%) agreed that the lack of resources for transport to college was the major cause of absenteeism. Pregnancy or childbirth was the second most prevalent cause of absence in 50 (38.4%) participants (Table III).

Table I: Demographic data

Factors	N (%)
Age	
Below 20	80 (61%)
21-23	25 (19.9%)
24-27	24 (18.8%)
Above 28	1 (0.3%)
Academic level	
BScN Generic 1 st year	40 (31%)
BScN Generic 2 nd year	30 (23%)
BScN Generic 3 rd year	30 (23%)
BScN Generic 4 th year	30 (23%)

Table II: Prevalence of absenteeism

	Responses				
	Strongly agreed	Partially agreed	Neutral	Partially disagreed	Strongly agreed
Voluntary absence from college	80	34	8	5	3
Voluntary absence from clinical posting	68	48	5	2	7
Presence in all classes and clinical posting	24	25	35	35	11
Students miss duty during clinical posting	45	45	30	8	2
Rare absence from classes and clinical posting	50	31	33	10	6
Total frequencies	267 (41%)	183 (28%)	111 (18%)	60 (9%)	29 (4%)

Table III: Factors influencing absenteeism

Factors	Responses				
	Strongly agreed	Partially agreed	Neutral	Partially disagreed	Strongly agreed
Health issues	40	65	16	4	5
Long commute	45	45	27	8	5
Pregnancy or childbirth	50	40	30	5	5
Lack of resources for transport	52	48	25	4	1
Lack of interest in studies	12	34	43	31	10
Non-payment of school fees	10	42	32	44	2
Total frequencies	209 (28%)	274 (35%)	173 (22%)	96 (12%)	28 (3%)

Discussion

This study evaluated the prevalence of absenteeism in nursing students and the factors influencing it. The

results revealed a high prevalence of absenteeism (41%) among students. Thus, this indicates that nursing students are more likely to miss classes and clinical practice.

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The study's results comply with a study conducted in Sudan on frequency and factors influencing absenteeism in nursing students. According to the results, 29.4% of the students were likely to be absent from college and clinic (Faiza, 2015). Another study conducted in Nigeria also supports our findings. The findings revealed a high prevalence of absenteeism in diploma nursing students (30%), and it has been seen as a big issue in theoretical education and clinical practice (Chukwu et al., 2017).

Concerning the factors of absenteeism, our findings revealed that health issues, long commutes to college, pregnancy, lack of interest in studies, non-payment of dues, and lack of transport are the major factors. Among these factors, lack of transportation affected most participants (40%), followed by pregnancy and childbirth (38.4%). Abdul Rehman and Nawaz et al. also show social factors as the major cause of absenteeism (Abdelrahman and Abdelkader, 2017; Nawaz et al., 2018). Suresh Ray also reported a 13.6% absenteeism among students due to inadequate transport facilities (Ray et al., 2018). In addition, Demir, K., Akman Karabeyoglu, Y., Wadesango N, Machingambi S., and Kearney, C. A. (Demir and Karabeyoglu, 2015; Kearney, 2008; Wadesango and Machingambi, 2011) report similar findings.

Conclusion

A high prevalence of absenteeism is observed among nursing students, with a lack of transportation facilities being the major issue.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared an absence of conflict of interest.

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