

**EFFECTS OF EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTIONS UPON ADOLESCENTS'
KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD NURSING**

**AN ABSTRACT OF
A THESIS**

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This study examined the effect of an educational program directed at increasing knowledge about nursing on attitudes toward a career in nursing in adolescent students. The adolescent population was chosen for this study due to their development stage of Piaget's formal operations as well as their embarking on Ginzberg's developmental task of choosing an occupation.

This experimental study used a convenience sample selection of adolescent students (mean age 13.06). All subjects were pretested on their knowledge of nursing practice and attitude toward nursing as a career. An experimental group received an educational program about a career in nursing, and posttesting using identical instruments was done four weeks following the educational program. The control group was pre- and posttested but did not receive the educational program until after the posttesting. Demographic information regarding age, gender, plans to attend college, and prior exposure to a nurse role model was elicited.

A 2X2X2 mixed factorial was conducted to evaluate the effects of the three independent variables (group assignment, time when tested, and order in which the knowledge and attitude instruments were presented) on the two dependent variables (knowledge of nursing practice and attitudes toward nursing). Hypotheses were stated as follows.

- I. Combined pre- and posttest mean scores on the knowledge survey and on the attitude survey will be significantly higher in the experimental group as compared to the control group ($p \leq .01$).
- II. Collapsed across groups, mean scores on the posttest of knowledge and on attitudes will be significantly higher than the pretest mean scores ($p \leq .01$).

III. There will be a significant increase from the pretest to the posttest scores of knowledge and on scores of attitudes for the experimental group as compared to the control group ($p \leq .01$).

No significant differences were found between the control and experimental groups regarding the collected demographic variables. The average knowledge score for the control group did not change between the pre- and posttest. However, the average knowledge score of the experimental group significantly increased between these two testings. Neither the experimental nor control groups reported a significant change in the average attitude score between the pre- and posttest. Average attitude scores were positive. Thus, while knowledge scores significantly increased for the experimental group, attitude scores did not change.

This study confirms the findings of several studies that attitudes toward nursing are positive. Grossman and Northrop (1993) suggest that there still persists a lack of knowledge about nurses' roles. This finding was supported in the present study.

Limitations of this study were that only schools that requested the educational program were used. It is plausible that some external factor, other than the educational program, caused the increase on knowledge scores from pre- to posttest. This was a convenience sample selection, not necessarily representative of the adolescent population.

The educational program developed for this study, in cooperation with the Connecticut League for Nursing, is an appropriate method to educate adolescents regarding nursing as a career. Adolescents in this study had positive attitudes toward nursing. Future research could focus on what factors most influence adolescents' attitudes, and what effect knowledge of nursing practice has on the nurse-patient