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ADAPTATION OF ADULT OSTOMY PATIENTS
AS A FUNCTION OF THEIR SELF-ESTEEM

AN ABSTRACT OF
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by

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The purpose of this study was to investigate self-esteem as a function of adjustment in individuals who had undergone a surgical procedure for permanent alterations in their elimination resulting in an ostomy. The hypothesis was that adult ostomy patients who have a high level of self-esteem, were better adjusted than adult ostomy patients with a low level of self-esteem.

There were 22 subjects in this study. Data were collected on all subjects who attended a monthly meeting of an ostomy support group. Subjects were all over 18 years of age, had a permanent ostomy performed one or more years ago, and could read and write English. Subjects were asked to complete a demographic sheet and two questionnaires. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1979), a scale consisting of 10 statements which had 4-point responses, was used to measure self-esteem. The Maklebust Ostomy Adjustment Scale (MOAS) (Maklebust, 1985), an 18-item Likert scale, was used to test the variable of adjustment following ostomy surgery.

Subjects were then categorized into one of two groups (high or low) on the basis of their score on the RSES. For each level of self-esteem an average adjustment score was computed. A one-way randomized analysis of variance was used to evaluate the hypothesis.

The results for this study revealed that those who had high self-esteem, scored significantly higher on the adjustment scale than those with low self-esteem ($p = 0.0002$). Therefore the research hypothesis was supported. Analysis of demographic variables of gender and type of ostomy, though not hypothesized, did not show any significant differences in the two groups ($p > 0.05$). Also, there were no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in the two groups when compared in terms of age and time since the procedure was performed.

Implications for nursing are discussed. Nurses should strive to improve the assessment of their patients with regards to self-esteem. Interventions which enhance self-esteem should be explored. Future research should look at this population in respect to other influential variables as marital status and reasons for belonging to or not belonging to an ostomy support group.