

PEER SUPPORT AFFECTS THE STRESS LEVEL OF NURSING STUDENTS IN CARRYING OUT CLINICAL PRACTICE

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Background: Academic demands, nursing clinical practice competencies, and poor interaction with preceptors are at risk of causing stress in students. Peer support can increase enthusiasm and reduce stress levels. **Objectives.** The study aims to determine the relationship between peer support and the stress levels of students when carrying out nursing clinical practice. **Methods** This study is a quantitative, analytical descriptive design, cross-sectional approach. The population of all regular class nursing students in the fourth semester carrying out nursing clinical practice for the first time came from two nursing colleges totaling 130 respondents. The sample size obtained was 97 respondents. The sampling technique used probability sampling. The researcher developed the research instrument. The research instrument consisted of demographic data, peer support, and stress levels. The results of the validity and reliability tests obtained a Cronbach's alpha value ≥ 0.02 . Bivariate analysis used the chi-square test. **The results of the study** concluded that there was a significant relationship between peer support variables and stress levels with a p-value of 0.001. There is a moderate and unidirectional considerable relationship between peer support variables and stress levels, namely the higher the peer support, the higher the student's stress level..

Keywords: peer support; clinical practice; stress

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of nursing clinical practice for students who are doing it for the first time will cause anxiety, this is due to the lack of experience because they are not used to handling patients directly. They may feel that they do not have enough skills or confidence to handle real clinical situations. In addition, they are also afraid of making mistakes.

Although in a clinical environment, students are accompanied by a practice supervisor, they still have concerns about making mistakes that can affect the patient's health. Pressure from supervisors and clinical supervisors because students often feel observed or assessed continuously.

The hospital is a new environment, full of critical and emergency things, which is very different from the classroom or laboratory. The presence of noisy smells, and the often tense atmosphere makes students feel anxious. Interaction with patients and families can cause tension. The combination of academic burden and practice burden can add to students' burden and trigger

feelings of anxiety, confusion, or doubt. And finally, the a lack of emotional support in the form of guidance during clinical practice. As a result, students feel alone in facing existing challenges, Research conducted by Rahman et al. (2024) concluded that during clinical learning, students often lack the skills needed, this is a trigger for stress because they are required to be able to achieve the competencies given. Research by Fatimah et al., (2023) and Sridevi (2018), concluded that the demands of clinical learning will cause stress because of feelings of inability to achieve what has not been met.

Peer support can increase or decrease anxiety in students such as Kristina's research (2017). shows a meaningful relationship between social support and stress in students, one of which is the support given by peers, because this support makes students feel enthusiastic in doing what they have to achieve. Research by N. S. Wahyuni et al. (2016), concluded the same thing that support from peers can provide a sense of comfort to individuals so that individuals feel loved and appreciated for their existence, this is very helpful for students in creating enthusiasm.

Universities and institutions have prepared students thoroughly before students carry out clinical practice, both in terms of theoretical concepts and practicums that are very well conceptualized and describe the competencies that must be achieved through guidance and assistance from lecturers, stress management, and strengthening communication skills with patients and colleagues.

From the phenomena and descriptions above, it can be concluded that when students carry out nursing clinical practice for the first time, students will experience stress. Therefore, support is needed from oneself and others to reduce anxiety, one of which is peer support. Peer support is a form of social support.

Based on the background above, the purpose of this study is "Is there a relationship between peer support and stress levels of nursing students in carrying out clinical practice.

METHOD

This research is a quantitative study, with a descriptive analytical design, using a cross-sectional approach. The study population was all nursing students who were just learning clinical practice. Coming from two universities, namely As'syafiiyah Islamic University and Bani Saleh

University, totaling 130 people. Sampling used the probability sampling method, with a sample size of 97 respondents.

The inclusion criteria were regular class students in semester IV who had never worked as nurses and were just carrying out nursing clinical practice for the first time. The exclusion criteria were students who had worked in hospitals, and RPL class students. The independent variable of this study is peer support and the dependent variable is stress level.

This study was conducted from March to June 2024. Data collection was carried out by interviewing using a questionnaire, namely a questionnaire about respondent demographic data, peer support, and stress levels. The results of the validity and reliability test of the peer support questionnaire obtained a Cronbach's alpha of 0.854, which means that the questionnaire has high reliability. Data analysis used chi-square.

This research has also obtained ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Commission of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number LB.02.02/F.XIX.21/3840/2024 dated March 25, 2024.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (12pt)

RESULTS

Table 1.1
Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Category	Frequency
Gender		
Female	8	8.2 %
Male	89	91.8 %
Total	97	100%
School Major		
Science	74	76.3%
Social Studies	3	3%
Vocation	20	20.6%
Total	97	100%

Based on the data above, it is known that the majority of respondents were female with the most majors being science.

Table 1.2
Frequency Distribution of Peer Support Support and Stress Level

Variable	Category	Frequency	Persentase
Peer support	Moderate	46	47.7 5%
	Hight	51	52.5 %

Stress Level	Moderate	63	64.9
	Severe	34	35.1

The comparison between respondents who have high and moderate peer support is almost the same, with the highest stress level being moderate.

Table 1.3
Relationship Between Peer Support And Stress Levels Of Students
Who Are Just Starting Clinical Practice

Peer Support	Level of Stress						OR	P Value
	Moderate		High		Total			
	n	%	N	%	N	%		
Moderate	30	21,8	16	24,2	46	100		
High	16	24,2	35	26,8	51	100	4.102	0.001
Total	46	46,0	51	51,0	97	100		

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are different from the results of other studies. This study concluded that students who have a high support system have high levels of stress. Usually, a support system can help reduce the impact of stress but cannot always eliminate the source of stress itself. Often, time, additional experience, and the development of effective self-management skills are also needed to better deal with stress in the clinical environment (Tri, 2018).

A support system can indeed help reduce stress, but it does not eliminate it. A high support system may not be enough to reduce stress in the clinical environment because High stress can be caused by students facing situations that require high technical skills and discipline, including interacting directly with patients, performing medical procedures, and adapting to the hospital system. These challenges can still be a source of major stress even though there is a support system (Fadhilah, MN, ed all., 2023). In addition, high self-expectations and professional standards have high expectations for themselves to have optimal clinical performance or appearance. Even though they have a high support system, pressure from within to appear perfect or not make mistakes can cause great stress, especially in the first practice which is full of uncertainty. High self-expectations and professional standards are indeed one of the main sources of stress for nursing students undergoing their first clinical practice (Tri, 2018).

Perfectionism and high expectations of themselves to achieve perfectionist standards in practice. Students often want to be considered competent and do not want to show weaknesses or

shortcomings, either in the eyes of instructors, mentors, or colleagues. This perfectionism can create great internal pressure, especially when students feel that their abilities are not yet adequate. Concerns about assessment and evaluation: High professional standards in the world of nursing are due to strict evaluations from instructors and other health workers. Students often feel anxious about this assessment, because the evaluation can affect their academic reputation and future career prospects. This concern exacerbates stress, especially for those who really want perfect performance.

Identity crisis and adjustment: In the early stages of practice, students are still in the process of forming their professional identity. They may feel a mismatch between the desire to act like a professional nurse and the limitations of their experience. This feeling of "not being good enough" causes stress because they feel they are not yet able to meet self-expectations or professional standards. Demands to Adapt Quickly: Nursing students are expected to adapt quickly to dynamic clinical situations. This expectation adds pressure, as they feel they must meet high standards in the practice setting, even though this may be their first time in the field. In nursing education, there is a competitive culture where students compare themselves to each other in clinical practice. This adds pressure because students feel they need to prove their abilities and do not want to lag behind their peers.

These high self-expectations can be challenging and stressful, especially when nursing students are faced with new clinical situations that require skills they have not yet mastered. To overcome this pressure, it is important for them to learn to manage their expectations, accept that learning involves mistakes, and balance professional aspirations with the reality of developing skills.

Incompletely integrated support systems: Even when students have support systems, these supports may not be readily or fully functional in the clinical setting. For example, family and friends outside of the clinic may not fully understand the unique stressors of the medical setting. Additionally, even when mentors are available, not all mentors can guide in a way that reduces student stress.

These high self-expectations can be a challenge in themselves and cause stress, especially when nursing students are faced with new clinical situations that require skills they have not yet mastered. To cope with this pressure, they need to learn to manage their expectations, accept that

learning involves mistakes, and balance professional aspirations with the reality of developing skills (Bilgic, S., & Celikkalp, U, 2021).

The conclusion section contains research findings in the form of answers to research questions or in the form of a summary of the results of the discussion, implications of research results and recommendations can also be added. Narrative writing, a maximum of 5% of the entire content of the article.

CONCLUSION

1. The stress experienced by students when they first undergo clinical practice is caused by high self-expectations and performance pressure. High social support sometimes feels like they have to meet higher expectations and are afraid of disappointing or being considered less competent, lack of experience and skills in handling clinical situations, and less specific and targeted support. Another factor is the tendency to compare themselves with friends who may have better abilities, which can increase their lack of confidence and worsen their stress, especially in a clinical environment that demands high precision, accuracy, and skill.
2. Students who have a high support system from peers are 4 times more likely to experience high stress compared to friends who have moderate social support.
3. Appropriate social support from peers affects stress levels in students who are new to nursing clinical practice

IMPLICATIONS:

The role of clinical supervisors is very necessary to accompany students so that their stress levels decrease

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