

HOW ARE THE ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS OF WORKING NURSES? AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Assertiveness remains a core component in one's daily life. It is precisely the ability to express feelings, best interests, and enables one to stand up for one's rights and express yourself in an explicit, open, and reasonable way without denying the rights of others. Being assertive will also increase the visibility in nursing. **Materials and Methods:** A Quantitative Research study was carefully conducted to find the assertiveness skill among nurses working in a tertiary care hospital, Kochi. The objectives of the study are to -identify the assertiveness skill among nurses working in tertiary care hospital. Identify the association between the assertiveness skill and the demographic variables. The study was done on a sample of 120 working nurses using a Standardized Rathus Assertiveness Scale to properly assess the assertiveness skill and a structured questionnaire to assess the demographic variables. Random sampling technique used for the proper selection of samples and 120 subjects were selected (computer selection). **Results:** The study results showed the highest population of nurses seen were somewhat assertive (35%). The considerable proportion of assertive nurses account for only 21.7%. The Very non-assertive respondents account for 5% of the total. 13.3% falls in the specific category of being Probably aggressive. In chi-square test results it is found that there is no association between the demographic variables and the assertiveness skill of nurses (all p-values are >0.05). Hence, the demographic variables do not influence the assertiveness skill of working nurses. **Conclusion:** In the chosen sample obtained by a random selection of the nursing population, the highest proportion of nurses was found to be under the category of being situationally assertive. There are also a significant number of nurses who were aggressive as well. The visible results also state that the demographic variables of the respondents like age, gender, etc. do not influence the assertiveness skill of nurses (p-value >0.05 in all variables).

KEYWORDS: Assertiveness skill, Working Nurses.

INTRODUCTION

Assertiveness represents the ability to express one's feelings, opinions, beliefs, and needs directly, openly, and honestly, while not violating the personal rights of others.^[1] Being assertive means being able to stand up for your rights and the rights of other people by positively approaching others, without being either aggressive or offending the feelings of others. Assertiveness remains a core interpersonal behavior and is key to human relations. Assertiveness is a substantial communication style that positively enhances successful relationships with patients, families, and colleagues.^[2] Studies positively confirmed that assertive individuals show higher self-worth and enhanced self-esteem. Anyone who is assertive always respects the thoughts,

understands the feelings, and accepts the beliefs of others. It is one of the essential skills in the modern operational environment especially in the field of nursing professions.^[3] Assertiveness mainly concerns being able to express wishes, wants, and desires and for which it is a critical personal and interpersonal skill. In all your interactions with other people, whether at home or work, with employers, customers or colleagues, assertiveness can aid you to express yourself in a clear, open, and reasonable way, without undermining your own or others' rights.

Being assertive is therefore a valued skill for today's professional and competent nurses. It recognizes increasingly that a nurse needs to behave assertively. It is

vital for nurses these days that they listen attentively to the views of others and that of his/her patients and responding appropriately, whether the statement is right or wrong. Assertiveness also helps the nurses to promptly accept the responsibilities assigned to them and delegate them to others as well. Many qualities that the nurse should attain to become successful in his/her profession include being grateful, expressing appreciation of others, admitting mistakes and apologize, self-control, and a high hold of self-esteem. All these superior qualities can be typically attained once they properly understand the paramount importance of assertiveness and the actual purpose of being assertive.

Assertive staff nurses can present practical suggestions in a direct, pleasant way, give and take criticism, assess the rights and responsibilities in a nursing situation, and act on assessments in a thoughtful problem-solving way. Lack of assertiveness results in diminished communication efficacy, thus compromising patient care. An assertive training is designed to which help the individual to change how they view themselves and establish self confidence and interpersonal communication.^[4]

Assertiveness is typically considered to be an essential skill for nurses. Assertiveness skills can be seen as a "valuable component" for successful professional nursing practice, with which many conflicts in a nursing situation can be successfully ruled out.^[5] It is precisely a key attribute for nurses, without its true autonomy and personal empowerment cannot be achieved.^[6]

Assertiveness is thought to be a healthy form of behavior. Assertiveness is also an expression of self-esteem. Assertiveness is one of the essential skills in the modern working environment, there are many benefits of being assertive such as; better time management, increased self-esteem, and the ability to negotiate more effectively.^[2]

Becoming more assertive can lead to increased respect and recognition as a person and as a nurse. It can get the individual more of what he/she wants. Assertiveness is considered to be an essential skill for nurses. It is a key attribute for nurses without its true autonomy and personal empowerment cannot be achieved. Assertive behaviour demands control over outbursts of anger, crying, or other behaviour patterns that exhibit a lack of professionalism. Assertiveness skills can be seen as a valuable component for successful professional nursing practice, with which many conflicts in a nursing situation can be successfully ruled out². Nurses interact with patients, colleagues, and other health care professionals daily, such an interaction is improved when nurses have good communication skills.^[3]

A study conducted in Ludhiana, on effectiveness of assertiveness training on level of assertiveness among 40 staff nurses revealed the scores of level of assertiveness

during post intervention was high as compared to pre intervention scores. Before giving the intervention, majority had average level of assertiveness (97.5%) but after the intervention most of them having (95%) good level of assertiveness.^[7]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Quantitative research approach with the descriptive design was selected to identify the assertiveness skill among the active nurses. The study setting was at a tertiary care hospital, Kochi. A sample of 120 nurses was selected for the study. The tools employed for data collection include Tool 1- Self-structured questionnaire for the collection of the demographic profile and Tool 2- Structured Rathus Assertiveness Scale(RAS) to carefully assess the assertiveness skill among nurses. The scale contains 30 items in total. The Split-half reliability (a measure of internal consistency reliability) was calculated to be 0.77, suggesting the qualities measured by the RAS possess moderate to high homogeneity. The period of data collection was between 8th February 2020 to 13th February 2020. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethical Committee, and official permission was obtained from the Nursing Director to proceed with the data collection. The sample was carefully selected using a random sampling technique (computer method). The researcher properly obtained informed consent from the willing participants after clearly explaining the social importance of the study and data collection procedure. The sample selection keenly followed the exclusion and inclusion criteria as per the requirements of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the analysis of the study, the sample collected was from 120 working nurses from a tertiary care hospital. The collected data include the demographic variable (self-structured questionnaire) and assertiveness skill(Rathus assertiveness scale). The statistical analysis of the study was carried out using SPSS software and the association was done by chi-square test. Participant's demographics data were also associated using the chi-square test.

Section I: Sample characteristics

The demographic variables considered in the study include age, gender, marital status, education, experience, area, type of family, ordinal position, habitation, and the support system available. Majority of the subject belonged to the age group of 31-35 (38.3%), followed by age groups of 26-30 (36.7%), up to 25(15%), 36-40(8.3%) respectively. Only 1.7% were above the age of 40. Around 93.3% of the study subjects were females while the remaining were males(6.7). Majority of the participants were married (81.7%) while 16.7% of them were not. A very few them were separated (1.7%). More than half of them had bachelors degree(53.3%). others had a nursing diploma (43.3%) or a master's degree(3.3%). Most of them had an experience of more than 5 years(60%). some of them had experience less than 2 years(15%) while some had experience from

2-5 years(25%). most of them are having more than 5 years of experience in AIMS followed by subjects with 2-5 yearsexperience (35%) and less than 2 years experience(21.7%).63.3 % of the study subjects stay in their home while 21.7% are from hostels and rest 15% are paying guests. Majority of them have family as their support system. the rest have friends/ colleagues and superiors as support systems. The urban and rural areas of residence account for 37% and 22% respectively. Semi-rural areas take up nearly half of the area

distribution of nurses (41%) Majority were from nuclear type(70%) of family very few belongs to extended type of family rest from(28%) joint family. Semi-rural areas take up nearly half of the area distribution of nurses (41%) and nuclear families account for three-fourth (70%). The extended family type only has 2% out of the total proportion while the joint family has 28%. The urban and rural areas of residence account for 37% and 22% respectively.

Section II Assertiveness skills of staff nurses n-120

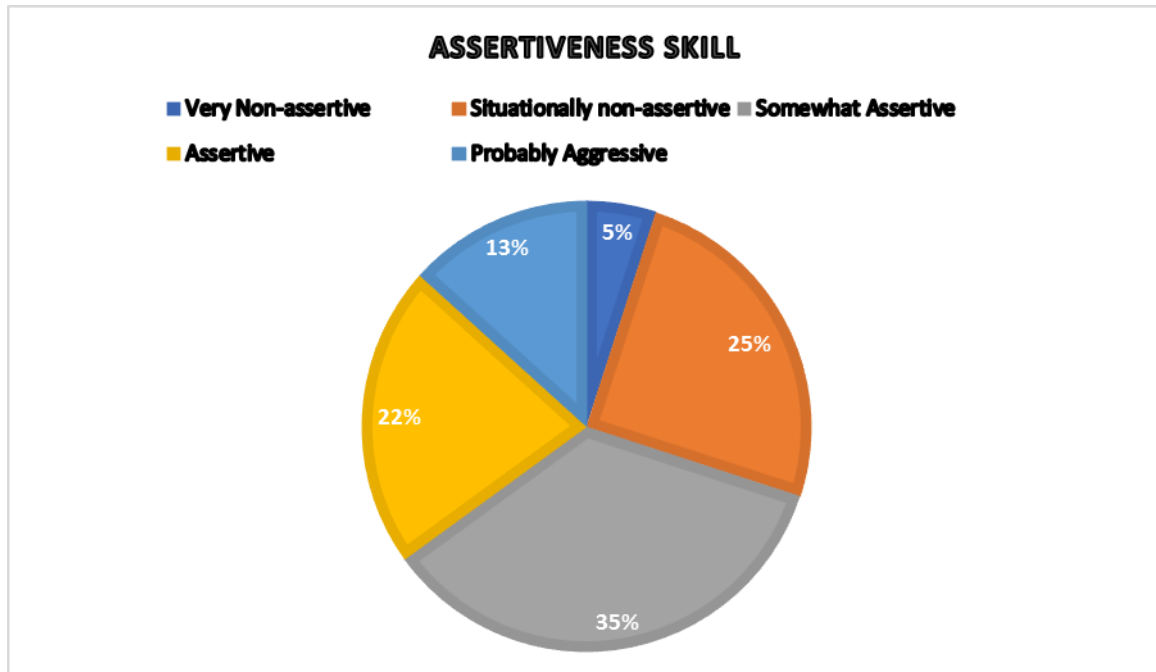


Figure 4: displays the chart of assertiveness skills.

On considering the assertiveness skill of the working nurses, it is bagged that out of the total sample nearly 35% of the nurses are found to be somewhat assertive, followed by situationally assertive groups (25%). It is carefully noted that there are only a very few(5%) who fall in the specific category of being non-assertive ones. Assertive nurses take up nearly a quarter of the total proportion (21.7%). It is a striking feature that there are 13.3% of nurses who fall in the probably aggressive category.

Section III: Association between the demographic characteristics of nurses and the assertiveness skills

Association between the demographic characteristic of the respondents and the assertiveness skill was done carefully using the chi-square test. It is found that in the majority of individual association of the variables, the finding was found to be in significant. In this study, this result indicates the assertiveness skill does not influence the demographic variables of nurses.

DISCUSSION

Assertiveness will enable you to control, express, and improve the coping skills of every individual who practice it. Being assertive not only help you to boost your self-esteem but will also help you to be confident, clear, and controlled in all aspects of life.

A study was conducted by the department of nursing and midwife at trinity college, Ireland, to assess how assertive are the nurses in the workplace. This pilot study collected data from small sample (27) of registered nurses. The study results yield that the assertiveness of the active registered nurses was found to be passive. These findings suggest that nurses behave passively, conforming to the image of a kind nurse. The nurses were reluctant to express their viewpoints and opinions. They provide constructive criticism. The study suggests that it might be due to work environment factors such as the atmosphere of work and the colleagues who might contribute to the non-assertive behaviour of the nurses.^[6]

In the present study, the investigators have observed no such relation between the demographic variables and the assertiveness level. This might be anticipated as the

study was conducted solely on a scanty population of nurses (sample size=120). A notable example is that the population of nurses above 40 years of age was only 1.7% of the total sample. The study has selected the sample based on a random sampling technique and thereby becomes a boon for the study. The nurses found are to be only somewhat assertive. The nurses may not be able to function fully as self-confident and positive.

CONCLUSION

Assertiveness always helps people to justify their perspectives without disrespecting the considerations and ideas of others. Nursing being an incredibly professional career, nurses must be assertive in the day to day circumstances of life. Assertiveness skill is an integral part of good communication in the healthcare setting. This study result highlights that the nurses are somewhat assertive. However, they are in need to enhance their assertiveness levels from somewhat assertive to being assertive at all points in life both personally and professionally.

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