Incorporating End-of-Life Care in an Undergraduate Nursing Simulation Curriculum: Selecting a Student-Centered Simulator

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Between 70-80% of undergraduate students are working at least 30 hours per week. Student-centered learning becomes even more vital when preparing learners with diverse working backgrounds to work in stressful environments, including caring for patients at the end-of-life. This research examined the relationship between simulated patient type (high-fidelity mannequin and standardized patient) and undergraduate nursing students’ stress when participating in an end-of-life care simulation and the number of professional roles in which the student has been exposed to individuals in high crises. Anchored Instruction Theory undergirded the study. A quasi-experimental research design was used to examined 159 undergraduate nursing students’ pre- and post-simulation physiological stress scores (percentage change in heart rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure). The analysis was conducted using a two-way ANOVA. There was a statistically significant interaction effect between the number of professional roles on the percentage change in heart rate and patient type (F(2, 153)=4.30, p≤0.05), systolic blood pressure (F(2, 153)=3.26, p≤0.05). However, there was no statistically significant interaction effect between the number of professional roles on percentage change in diastolic blood pressure and patient type (F(2, 153)=0.12, p≥0.05). The highest change scores in heart rate occurred among those students who lacked professional exposure to individuals in high crises, and with standardized patients (M=6.95, SD-16.14). The highest change score in systolic blood pressure occurred among those with two or more previous professional roles who were exposed to individuals in high crisis situations and when care involved standardized patient (M=11.60, SD=20.83). End-of-life care is part of the NCLEX-RN.