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## Public Perception of Nursing as a Profession

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### ABSTRACT

A person who has completed a basic nursing education programmed and is licensed in his/her country to practice professional nursing is a professional nurse. This paper aims to identify public perception of nursing as a profession. Method: A comprehensive systematic search of published literature and journal articles from PubMed and EBSCOHOST databases was done. Search strategy specific to each database was used. During initial search 1642 titles were retrieved and after screening 11 articles were selected for full text screening. Finally 5 research articles were selected based on the inclusion criteria. Result: Out of 5 articles, 3 research studies finding showed positive perception of nursing as a profession. Almost all of participant in these study perceived nursing as an opportunity to serve humanity; Participants agreed that our prejudice society has great influence on nursing students in choosing nursing profession as their career. Conclusion: The social media having an impact over image of nursing as a profession. As several study findings showed that nursing career is not respected career, society have negative view to the nursing profession. Because of this image students don't want to choose nursing as their profession. On other hand some study results says that nursing students are motivated by extrinsic factor such as good salary, stability and low stress.

**Keywords--** Public Perception, Nursing as a Profession

### I. INTRODUCTION

Nursing has been named as oldest of the arts and the newest of the profession. Nurses are most important person in health team as they constitute a large portion of manpower health services; nurses are having major responsibilities in prevention of disease, promotion of health and provision of care for the sick as well as meeting the health needs. Therefore, nurses have a essential contribution in maintaining and upgrading the health and health services of the community. Despite of this nurses face lot of hurdles in their profession because of the negative image nurses in public. In India about

90% of people have minimum knowledge regarding nursing (Swamy 2009). General public take nursing as a simple task and that anyone can be or become nurse. Public also consider nurses to be physician's assistant and perform menial work like cleaning, bathing, and grooming of patients.

### II. NEED FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC PERCEPTION

There are vast literatures suggesting improvement in nurses' perceived image. Nursing profession is not respected career option, society have negative view to the nursing profession, joining to nursing, cause embarrassment to their family and themselves (Abd el-halim s 2012). Minimal interest has been noticed in choosing nursing as a carrier option compared with medicine, computer science, teaching, and business administration (Badran A. Al-Omar 2003).

A study conducted at Dar-es-salaam on medical students shows that students are poor awareness of most of the issues regarding the nursing profession. But students do not want to choose nursing as their professions due to the image nurses have in the public (Kiwanukaachilles 2009).

There are some studies which suggest that still many negative perception exist in nursing profession because of which many people choose alternate career option. Also on the other hand many students after graduation are interested to select nursing as a profession and strongly attracted to it. Serious efforts should therefore be made to maintain and promote the positive image of nursing (Raghda K. Shukri, Bakkar S. Bakkar 2013).

Difficult work and emotional challenges detracted people from choosing nursing as a career. More interesting is the perception that nurses work long, inflexible hours. Nursing is not perceived to fulfill most of the top-ranking expectations of an ideal career. However, the root of this expectation-gap is, once again,

misconceptions or lack of information about the benefits of nursing (*Mkhize & Nzimande 2007*).

Male students are motivated primarily by extrinsic factors such as good salary, stability and low stress. The reason for this could be because men are expected to be the breadwinners of the family and perceive that this could be fulfilled with a well-paying stable job. The students are having stress because of academic and the modern lifestyle they live in. Because of this after the completion of the academic year students want stability in term of their job and salary. Students believe that choosing nursing as a carrier will be having job stress and low salary. (*Kniveton 2004*).

An urgent need is seen in the area of nursing to improve the image of nurses in the society to develop positive attitudes towards nursing profession, to empower the nurses and also train nurses for role performance and maintain their dignity and respect. (*Poredd, Ramachandra*).

Keeping this in view, a systematic search was conducted to evaluate the perception of nursing as a profession.

#### *Aim*

The aim of this review is to identify the various public perceptions of nursing as a profession.

#### *Objective*

To identify and describe the public perception of nursing as profession.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### *Search strategy*

An electronic search of articles published in various journals till 2017 (Aug) was conducted. Search was restricted to only English language. The database search done was PubMed and EBSCOHOST. Articles containing following key search terms were retrieve.

*Table 1: Mesh and Non-mesh terms*

Mesh term	Non-mesh term
Common Helping behavior Help Assess Determine Insight Comprehension Occupation	Community Assist Understanding Vocation

### IV. PUBMED SEARCH STRATEGY

common[All Fields] OR "residence characteristics"[MeSH Terms] OR community[Text Word] AND "helping behavior"[MeSH Terms] OR assist[Text Word] OR help[All Fields] AND assess[All Fields] OR determine[All Fields] AND insight[All Fields] OR "comprehension"[MeSH Terms] OR understanding[Text Word] AND career[All Fields] OR "occupations"[MeSH Terms] OR occupation[Text Word] OR "occupations"[MeSH Terms] OR vocation[Text Word]

#### *Type of study*

Descriptive study, exploratory, survey.

#### *Type of participant*

Nursing professionals including student nurses and nurse educators.

#### *Setting*

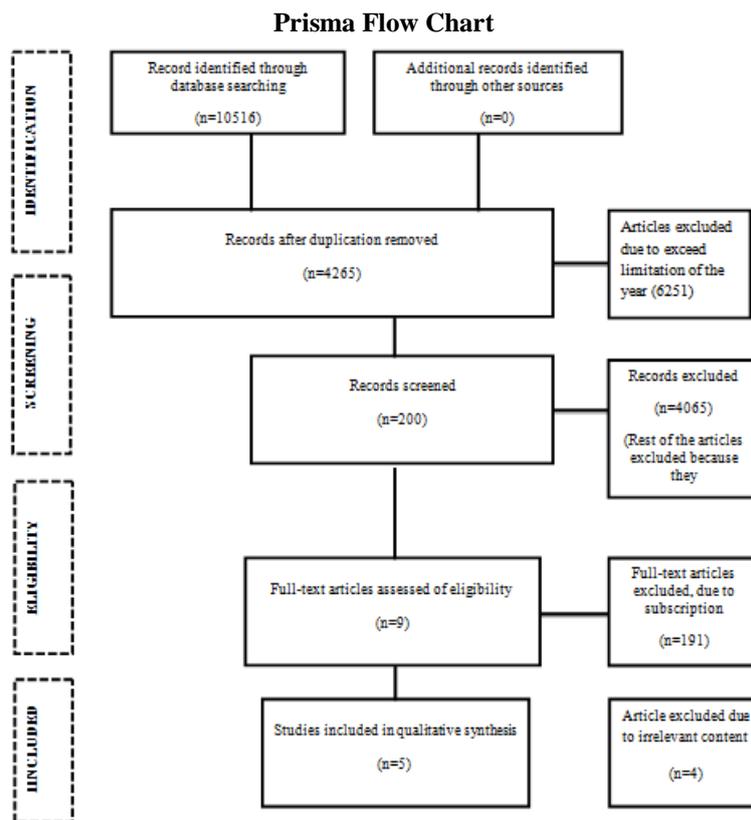
Hospital, Academic Institution.

#### *Outcome*

Public perception of nursing as a profession.

### V. RESULT

The systematic search was conducted by framing the terms individually and in combination with all synonyms, also according to the database. In addition to this, a manual search was undertaken using the keywords and synonyms from already found articles. Addition of 5 articles were found. Initial search retrieved **10516** articles over which **4265** articles were selected. Duplicates were removed and reviewed **200** articles for eligibility. **4065** articles were excluded because of duplications in two databases. **191** studies were excluded due to unavailability of full text. **16** articles were removed due to not similar to the study. Hence **5** articles were screened which includes quantitative study.



**DATA EXTRACTION TABLE**  
Table 2: Data extraction table

Author/year	Research design	Finding
S. Swarna (2015)	Exploratory survey	The study reveals that participant preferred area of work is teaching. More half of the students are attracted to migrate to abroad. There is a need to motivate the student to work as bedside nurses and nurse administrators by providing better financial incentives for working conditions.
Peter I. et al (2005)	Survey design	This study result shows that campaign had likely high impact on enrollment in an educational program and also advertisement made student feel good about becoming nurse. The survey provides a mix of both positive and negative perceptions of the nursing shortage, awareness of issues that need to be addressed by nursing educators and by practicing nurses, and evidence that a focused multifaceted initiative to increase the number of people becoming nurses can be effective.
Kiwanuka Achilles (2009)	Exploratory cross-sectional	This study has shown that students are at least aware of most of the issues regarding the profession but they do not want to choose for it due to the image nurses have among the public. The findings of this research are important in terms of providing insights that may lead us towards a new direction in addressing nursing student recruitment.
Caroline zulu, Dr. C. Ngoma. (2015)	Exploratory descriptive	Majority of students had a positive perception of the Nursing profession. Even though it was so it is worrying that as many as 30% had a negative perception, probably indicating that the students were not sure what they are choosing as their career for life. This could lead to performance problems during training and consequently attitude problems during service delivery.
Marwa K. Mohammed (2015)	Descriptive	The study revealed that that the Secondary school students constitute a considerable proportion of candidates who might be candidates for enrollment in Faculty of Nursing, so it was important to identify their knowledge and attitude as well as to that factors that might affect their enrollment in nursing.

## VI. SUMMARY OF FINDING

The available literature refined to get 1 qualitative, 3 quantitative, 1 mixed approach. Out of 5 articles, 3 research studies finding are showing positives perception of nursing as a profession also most of students are motivated to join in nursing to settle early and get government job.(Swarna S. 2015). Almost all of them perceived nursing as an opportunity to serve humanity subjects agreed that social prejudice has great influence on nursing students in choosing nursing profession as their career.

## VII. IMPORTANCE IN EDUCATION

There were significant differences between perceptions of an ideal career and nursing. The greatest discrepancies were centered around the items relating to “making decisions for myself,” “being very busy,” “working with my hands a lot,” “making a lot of money,” and “always having a job.” Nursing was seen as having less decision-making, being more busy, having more hands on, and making less money than the ideal career.

### Future significance

The result extended in this review supports positive self-image and perception of nursing as a profession. In contrast to all the studies which conducted only on nursing students and nursing professional, future studies should engage in with other population and setting other than hospital and nursing colleges.

### Limitation

- Database search was limited
- Search strategy was refined to perception of nursing as a profession
- Meta- analysis will give more accuracy
- Confined to area of Nursing

### Strength

- Article search was carried out on a significant criteria.
- Review could find the perception of nursing as a profession.

### Weakness

- Articles mainly focus on perception of nursing as a profession.
- Only 5 quantitative articles were included for data synthesis due to limitations.

### Recommendations

#### Review would have been better if it could have:

If the sample included general population other than students.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Perception of nursing as a profession can be enhanced through awareness and also by enhancing nurses' self-esteem. Since nurses are the only one who can make change in perceived image of nursing as a profession.

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