



Virtual Psychiatric Nursing Simulations as Comprehensive Clinical Experiences

A NEW DIRECTION

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Psychiatric Clinical Experiences



- ▶ Delivering quality psychiatric clinical experiences to pre-licensure undergraduate nursing students can be an incredible challenge (Lane, Corcoran, Weare, & Perry, 2017).
- ▶ Nursing programs are tasked to find appropriate clinical placements that can position students to cultivate an understanding of the complexities of mental health nursing (Oudshoorn & Sinclair, 2015).
- ▶ This task is compounded for distance nursing programs when multiple, individual, geographically appropriate sites are needed.

Varied and Inconsistent Clinical Sites



- ▶ Varied and inconsistent clinical sites are utilized.
 - ▶ Can limit a student's exposure to learning opportunities
 - ▶ Can limit the development of communication skills.
- ▶ Varied student experiences may not align to course content.



Image from: <https://crixeo.com/ask-dr-mckinley-schizophrenia-symptoms/>

Thoughts on Simulation



- ▶ As is known, simulation “opens doors for students to experience today’s complex and challenging patients and it enhances their critical thinking skills” (Davis, Kimble, & Gunby, 2014, p. 149) all within a safe, do no harm environment.
- ▶ “Simulation is effective for increasing student’s skills in **therapeutic communication** . . . problem solving, decision making **and risk assessment in mental health nursing practice**” (Brown, 2015, p. 445).
- ▶ Virtual simulation technologies can provide unique educational opportunities to learn and practice skills necessary for mental health nursing (Kidd, Knisley, & Morgan, 2012).



Rationale

- ▶ End-of-program outcomes can be met when some clinical hours are replaced with quality simulation (Hayden, Smiley, Alexander, Kardong-Edgren, & Jeffries, 2014).
- ▶ Allows for standardization and course alignment of content and therefore, an equitable clinical experience for all enrolled students.



Purpose

illustrate a framework to provide comprehensive psychiatric clinical experiences for distance pre-licensure nursing students through the incorporation of multiple, content specific, virtually simulated mental health scenarios.

Methods: Compare Strategies



- ▶ Student experiences were gauged by a clinical workbook in a dedicated mental health course in the baccalaureate curriculum, specific to distance education students.
- ▶ The student workbook included primary patient diagnosis, assessment, nursing diagnosis, interventions, and evaluation of interventions.
- ▶ A total of 51 workbooks were reviewed. This evaluation allowed for a quantitative assessment of the type of clinical site as well as clinical focus.
- ▶ Although there is a wide variety of clinical encounters identified, experiences are limited based on patient population at specific clinical sites available to students based on their location.

Methods: Workbook Topics



TOPIC	NUMBER
Depression	6
Suicidal Ideation	6
Bipolar Disorder	9
Psychotic Disorders	13
Cognitive Disorders	6
Stress Related Disorders	4
Substance Abuse	4
Non-Suicidal Self-Injury	1
Eating Disorders	1
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	1
TOTAL	51

Methods: Comparisons



- ▶ Current, virtually simulated, clinical education has been aligned based on specific mental health conditions to optimize consistent, equitable clinical experiences utilizing simulations for all major psychiatric disorders including depression, anxiety, PTSD, schizophrenia, substance abuse, cognition, and end of life issues.
- ▶ A review of scores on exam questions related to schizophrenia were assessed using two semesters of student scores prior to the introduction of e-simulation and two semesters of student scores following the use of aligned e-simulations.

e-Simulation: Mental Health



Abigail
Depression



John
Anxiety



Nicole
PTSD



Eric
Schizophrenia



Rachel
Substance Abuse

e-Simulation: Gerontology



End-of-Life



Cognition

- ▶ Can review student communication with patient (avatar).
- ▶ Can assess empathetic statements.
- ▶ Can assess patient education.
- ▶ Can review overall patient assessment (objective and subjective data).

Results: Schizophrenia Test Questions



Type of Clinical Experience	Semester	Number of Students	Average score in % of Schizophrenia Questions on Exam 2 12 Question Total	Average Score in % on Exam 2 40 Questions Total
Face-to-Face Clinical	Fall 2016	58	83	76
	Spring 2017	52	83	74
Simulated Clinical	Fall 2017	46	82	75
	Spring 2018	54	84	74

Conclusions



- ▶ the controlled use of simulated psychiatric nursing scenarios is an appropriate means to provide clinical experiences necessary to meet course objectives and to allow students a well-rounded, wider focus.
- ▶ simulated scenarios can be aligned to map with course content as it is covered versus the happenstance of the material being covered in a face-to-face clinical.
- ▶ as content is presented in the didactic portion of a course, the student is prepared to participate in a simulation based on the subject matter.
- ▶ test scores specifically related to schizophrenia show no difference regardless if face-to-face or simulation is used for clinical experience.
- ▶ connecting with one's community resources remains an important aspect allowing for reality and face-to-face interactions within their local environment.

Recommendations for Future Research



- ▶ use of tele-presence robots to bring online distance students into the simulation lab for live interviews with standardized psychiatric patients.
 - ▶ The use of standardized patients allows the student to practice communication skills and develop confidence in conducting assessments such as a mental status exam or a suicide risk (Yong-Shian, MCouns, Chng, Tan, & Yobas, 2016).
- ▶ comparing mental health standardized testing results between undergraduate nursing students completing face-to-face clinicals and those completing virtual simulated clinical experiences may provide revealing results
- ▶ to effectively structure virtual mental health simulations, assessing or evaluating student's perceptions of learning may be valuable.
- ▶ assess the test scores of other aligned, virtually simulated mental health concepts (depression, PTSD, substance abuse) as compared to test scores obtained from students attending face-to-face clinicals.

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