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Title: Social Empathy and Associated Factors Among Registered Nurses

Abstract:

The aim of this mixed method study was to describe how socially empathetic Registered Nurses employed at a large healthcare system were and to explore how selected demographic, personal, and work-related factors were associated with social empathy. A non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive research design employing an embedded triangulation mixed methods approach with a QUAL + quan emphasis was used. The study reached 3663 eligible RNs via an online email link, of whom 614 RNs responded (17% response rate). Besides demographic data, the study utilized the Interpersonal and Social Empathy Index (ISEI), and its subscales, MPT – ISEI (Macro – Perspective Taking), COG – ISEI (Cognitive – Empathy), SOA – ISEI (Self – Other Awareness), AR – ISEI (Affective – Response), in addition to the Social Issues Advocacy Scale (SIAS), the Self–Compassion Scale – Short Form (SCS–SF), a Single–Burnout Measure, and the Brief Trust/Mistrust in God Scale for assessment. To evaluate the data, measures of central tendency, ANOVAs, Pearson Correlation, and multilinear regression were performed. Social issues advocacy and self-compassion were found to be strong predictors of social empathy, as well as having first-hand knowledge of having received and accepted government subsidies, working in an empathy-supportive environment, and having increased work responsibility through one’s nursing position. The study also revealed that increased age, burnout, higher educational preparedness, and being male was associated with decreased social empathy scores. Religiosity was not significantly associated with social empathy. Overall, the study showed that the RNs had high total ISEI scores (72 out of a total 90 possible points, 80%).