

Nursing students' educational and professional point of view of male nurse candidates in Turkey

Gülbeyaz Baran¹ • Duygu Arikan^{2*}

¹Dicle University, Ataturk School of Health, Diyarbakir, Turkey.

²Department of Child Health Nursing, Health Sciences of Faculty, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: darikan@atauni.edu.tr. Tel: + (90)442 231 2377. Fax: + (90) 442 2360984.

Accepted 10th November, 2014

Abstract. Many studies have generally defined nursing as a female-dominated occupation. Knowledge and attitudes towards people were found to differ according to gender. This study was conducted to determine the points of view of student nurses at Faculty of Health Sciences about the roles of particularly male students in nursing. This is a descriptive study. This study included 357 students enrolled in the Department of Nursing at Ataturk University in the Spring Term of the academic year of 2012-2013. The data were analyzed using mean scores and the percentages in a computerized environment. The study adhered strictly to ethical values. In this study, 67.5 percent of the students were female. 66 percent of the students chose nursing voluntarily; 71 percent did so due to job prospects. 50.6 percent of the students stated that a certain title was not required for male nurses; 59.9 percent stated that male nurses would not bring in-class competitiveness; 22.1 percent reported that male nurses working in the medical services would significantly decrease workload; 15.6 percent said that male nurses would be of benefit to the privacy of male patients; and 56 percent stated that it would not lead to any trouble when male nurses worked in any medical service. It was found that the participants were not against co-education and that they believed male nurses would contribute not only to patient care but also to the advantage of nursing in general.

Keywords: Male nurse, patient care, student nurse, point of view.

INTRODUCTION

Male nurses have been a minority in the nursing profession throughout history (Villeneuve, 1994; Inoue et al., 2006). In most industrialised countries in Europe, Australia, and North-America, as well as in many countries in Asia and Africa, the nursing profession is characterised as a female-dominated occupation with the presence of relatively few men in nursing (Purnell, 2007). However, they have always existed in nursing; they have actively worked particularly in prisons and military services. Their participation in nursing was promoted between 1940 and 1950. The first male nurse appeared in England in 1974 (Villeneuve, 1994; Inoue et al., 2006). There has been a steady increase in the number of male nurses all around the world over time (Armstrong, 2002). The fact that male nurses work in specifically labor and delivery services might cause a sense of discomfort for

female patients (Inoue et al., 2006). The number of male nurses has been increasing on the one hand; the number of those who started working at hospitals and resigned within four years after graduation is four times more than the number of female nurses on the other (Sochalski, 2002). Women, with identities based on similarity, have less need to prove themselves. Thus, men have a more limited range of behaviors with which they feel comfortable than do women. Male nurses might avoid caring behaviors' and attitudes both by incorporating fewer of them into their practice than do female nurses and by denying the importance of these behaviors and attitudes to their practice. Male nurses might therefore be expected to score differently than female nurses on a self-measure of nurse caring, and for the same reasons, they might be scored differently than female nurses by

patients (Ekstrom, 1999).

According to Christensson et al. (2010), there was a higher prevalence of distress symptoms among females than among males. Another study revealed male students have significantly higher role strain than female students. Male students also have more negative feelings than female students during their obstetric placement (Tzeng et al., 2009). There was no significant difference between male and female students in health behaviors (Staib et al., 2006). The academic results of students were related to the interaction between students and faculty. Gender difference was not a significant contribution (Al-Hussami et al., 2011). Male students had lower scores for nursing professional values than female students, but the difference was not significant (Bang et al., 2011)

Female students accepted men in nursing education but male students believed that they lacked acceptance in their nursing studies. Both male and female nursing students think that nursing is a predominately female profession (Bartfay and Bartfay 2007)

Another study revealed that gender had no statistically significant influence on the achievement of nursing students (Blackman et al., 2007). Lin et al. (2010) found that there were no significant differences in professional values between male and female nursing students.

The Nursing Code introduced in Turkey in 1954 legislated against male nurses' education (Official Journal. Number: 8647. Dated 02.03.1954 and Law of Nursing Number 6283). However, a legal regulation was made with the "Law to Change Nursing Code", which was published in the Official Gazette in 2007 (Official Journal. Number: 26510. Dated 02.05.2007 and Law of Nursing Number 5634). As a result of this regulation in 2007, gender discrimination in nursing was abolished, and men were entitled to be members of the nursing profession (Kaya et al., 2011). Thereafter, the name of the medical assistance program, which was equivalent to nursing education, was changed into the nursing program thereby combining both programs. Similarly, those who graduated from the medical assistance program, equivalent to the nursing program, were entitled to work as a nurse (Official Journal. Number: 26510. Dated 02.05.2007 and Law of Nursing Number 5634).

Due to the fact that men were banned from nursing for years, identifying the public perception of nursing is of great significance in order to encourage schools and/ or institutes of nursing to accept male students (Koç et al., 2013). Boughan's (1994) study revealed that male students opt for nursing on such grounds as humanistic aspect, solicitude, job prospects, and the feeling of authorization, all of which were confirmed by male nurses as well. In Turkey, male nurses can also find a position easily in varied working areas of nursing (Arikan et al., 2000). Today, there are too few male nurse candidates enrolled in schools of nursing. Even these few students attending schools have started to change the public

perception on the gender-based role of nursing (Kocaer et al., 2004). The study conducted by Arikan et al. (2000) demonstrated, too, that male nurses were also required in the nursing profession and that positive student perceptions developed.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to determine point of view of students who are enrolled in the Nursing Program at Faculty of Health Sciences about nursing education, involving male nurse candidates and the role of male nurses in nursing.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study is a descriptive study.

Sample

The sample is a University in Turkey during 2012-2013 Academic Year Spring Term. In the study, all the student nurses were reached. Thus, no sampling was done (All the Department students were included without a simple random sampling method); however, 357 of them available at the time agreed to participate in the study.

Data gathering

Instrument

In this study, this questionnaire was prepared by the researcher in accordance with information in literature (Soerlie et al., 1997, Arikan et al., 2009, Koç et al., 2013) but validity and reliability analyses were not performed by the researchers. All students who agreed to work were included in the study. The survey included 20 questions about the following: age, year of education, gender, high school, average family income, place of living, whether nursing was chosen voluntarily or not, whether nursing was enjoyed or not, the reason for preferring nursing, whether a special title is required for a male nurse or not, if so, what title should be given, whether a title regulation is required or not, what benefits male nurses will bring to the nursing profession, whether male student nurses will bring in-class competitiveness, in what medical services male nurses should be required to work, in what medical services participants prefer working after graduation, whether male nurses reinforce the safety of female nurses in the services or not, whether female nurses have accepted male student or actual nurses, whether

Table 1. Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of student nurses.

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Female	241	67.5
Male	116	32.5
Type of High School		
Vocational High School for Health	9	2.5
Anatolian High School	89	25.0
General High School	214	59.9
Super High School	42	11.8
Private High School	3	0.8
Year at University		
1 st year	120	33.6
2 nd year	39	10.9
3 rd year	179	50.2
4 th year	19	5.3
Financial status		
Good (higher income group)	80	22.5
Moderate (middle income group)	239	66.9
Bad (lower income group)	38	10.6
Place of living		
City	189	52.9
Country	111	31.1
Village	57	16.0
Age (X ± SD)	20.67 ± 2.26	
Total	357	100.0

patients have accepted male student or actual nurses and what problems male nurses experience. A questionnaire form is used in the research as data collection tool.

Data collection procedure

The data were collected using an in-person survey conducted by the researcher. Face to face questionnaire (face to face interview) technique was used in data collection and it took about 15 min to complete each questionnaire.

Ethical consideration

The ethical approval to conduct the study was officially obtained from The Ethics Committee of Institute of Health Sciences. This study included the student nurses in the Department of Nursing. The participants of the study were informed about the aim of the study, answered the

questions on the survey to, and gave oral consent to the study. They were also informed that all the information they provided would not be shared elsewhere but kept strictly confidential and that they had the right to withdraw from the study anytime they wished.

Analysis

Statistical analyses were performed using the statistical software program *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 15.0* (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) for Windows (version 10). Means and percentages were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

The average age of student nurses participating in the study was 20.67 ± 2.26 . The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants are provided in Table 1. Table 1 shows that 67.5 percent of student nurses are

Table 2. Distribution of students' preferences for nursing.

Personal preferences	N	%
School preference		
Voluntary	235	66.0
Involuntary	121	34.0
Current likeability of nursing		
Yes	254	72.0
No	99	28.0
Reasons for job preference		
I like nursing	84	24.3
Job prospects	245	71.0
I like saving lives	1	0.7
'University Entrance Exam' score	5	1.4
Family pressure	10	2.9

females, 50.1 percent are third year students, 66.9 percent have a moderate income, and 52.9 percent live in the city center.

Table 2 demonstrates the distribution of students' preferences for nursing. It was found that 66 percent of the participants in this study preferred nursing voluntarily. As for likeability of nursing, 72 percent of the participants were found to currently like nursing. In addition, 71 percent of the participants stated that they preferred nursing for job prospects.

Taking student nurses' perception of male nurses into consideration, it was found that 50.6 percent of the participants thought that a special title was required for male nurses, and 67.7 percent suggested the most appropriate one was "*hemşir* (male nurses)". When asked what kinds of benefits male nurses bring to nursing, 41.1 percent of the participants stated that they would improve the quality of patient care. The participants were also asked about the medical services that male nurses could work, and 56 percent said all services were appropriate for male nurses, while 24.4 percent stated only emergency services were appropriate (Table 3).

Table 4 shows the distribution of student nurses' point of view about male nurses. 70.4 percent of the participants stated that male students would bring in-class competitiveness, 70.4 percent stated that patients accepted male nurses, 80.8 percent stated that nurses in services accepted male student nurses, 35.2 percent stated that the public point of view and humiliation were to most common problems of male nurses, and 29.9 percent stated that female patients had discomfort at male nurses and trouble defining their health problems easily to male nurses.

DISCUSSION

Gender is one of the leading characteristics of nursing.

Until recently, the nursing profession was regarded as a female profession on the grounds that patient care had a lot to do with women's nature (Koç et al., 2013). However, men in Turkey were entitled to be a nurse with the 02.05.2007 date and 5634 "Law to Change Nursing Code" (Official Journal, Number: 26510. Dated 02.05.2007 Law of Nursing Number 5634). 59.9 percent of the participants surveyed in this study were General high school, 25 percent were Anatolian high school, and 11.8 percent were super high school graduates. In the study of Cinar et al. (2011), 20 percent of the participants were super high school and 7.5 percent were Anatolian high school graduates. In the study of Yigit et al. (2007) among fourth year students of nursing, 22.2 percent of the participants were super high school and 6.2 percent were Anatolian high school graduates. In the study by Demiray et al. (2013), however, 44.8 percent of the participants were Anatolian high school and 9 percent were super high school graduates. The fact that graduates of Anatolian High school and super high school, which accept students with certain GPAs (grade point average), prefer that nursing is a positive contribution to the nursing profession.

In this study, 66 percent of the participants stated that they preferred nursing on voluntary basis, while, in Arikan et al. (2000) study, this percentage was determined to be 45.6. The study by Çinar et al. (2011) reported that more than half of the participants were satisfied with studying nursing. It was found in Yigit et al. (2007) study that 78.1 percent of the participants were content to have chosen nursing. 55.2 percent of the participants in the study by Demiray et al. (2013) stated that they preferred the nursing profession voluntarily, and 62.7 percent stated that they were satisfied with studying nursing. All the above-mentioned data show significant parallelism to the data obtained in our study. When asked whether they liked the nursing profession, 72 percent of the participants of this study answered positive. The same figure in the study

Table 3. Student nurses' perception of male nurses.

Point of view	N	%
Is a special title required for male nurses?		
Yes	173	49.4
No	177	50.6
What title is best for male nurses?		
Health Officer	2	1.6
'Hemşir'	84	67.7
Medical Officer	34	27.4
Assistant	3	2.4
Benefits of male nurses to nursing		
Lowering workload	46	21.1
Promoting professionalism	46	21.1
Essential to the privacy of male patients	34	15.6
Improving the quality of patient care	90	41.3
Services that male nurses can work in		
All	195	56.0
Orthopedics	26	7.5
Urology	26	7.5
Labor & Delivery	3	0.9
Emergency	85	24.4
Child	4	1.1
Surgery	1	0.5
All except for Labor and Delivery	4	1.1

carried out by Arikan and colleagues was 69.2 percent (Arikan et al., 2000). According to the study conducted by Soerlie and colleagues, almost all the male nurses surveyed stated that they would choose nursing again if they had the chance (Soerlie et al., 1997). These conclusions bear a striking similarity to ours. In addition to this, all these conclusions suggest that students who preferred nursing without any clear idea came to like the profession after they got some theoretical and practical education (Arikan et al., 2000). Wang and colleagues (2011), in their study, reported that most of the participants had involuntarily enrolled in the nursing programme. The main reason why they were depressed about being in nursing was because of the low social status of the profession. Students also experienced social pressure, loneliness, and frustration during their studies (Wang et al., 2011).

In the study by Cinar et al. (2011), however, the answers were good job prospects for 65 percent, university entrance exam score for 60 percent, being of assistance to people for 42.5 percent, and family pressure for 22.5 percent of the all participants. On the other hand, the study conducted by Karadag et al. (2008), reported that 40.7 percent of the participants preferred nursing in order to simply study at university, 21.6 percent due to family pressure, 12 percent due to

job prospects, and 12 percent in order to be of assistance to people. In another study, 86.6 percent of students preferred nursing due to good job prospects (Demiray et al., 2013). Boughan's (1994) study conducted abroad reported that male students preferred nursing on such grounds as humanistic aspect, solicitude, job prospects, and the feeling of authorization. The male nurses in Soleria et al. (1997) study were supported by their mothers in the beginning but not by their fathers before they preferred the profession. Taking the conclusions of this study into account, more than half of the participants preferred nursing for good employment prospects. Also, more than half of the participants in our study have a moderate financial status, which suggests that the foremost criterion while preferring the nursing profession is the prospective financial benefits of nursing.

In this study, the participants were asked what title was best for male nurses, and the answers were "*hemşir* (*male nurse*)" for 67.7 percent and medical officer for 27.4 percent. In the study by Demiray et al. (2013) however, the answers of male students were "*hemşir* (*male nurse*)" for 4.7 percent, health officer for 11.6 percent, and healer for 2.3 percent.

In our study, 56 percent of the participants stated that male nurses could work in all medical services, and 24.4 percent said that they would be of no trouble in emergency

Table 4. Point of view of student nurses about male nurses.

Point of view	N	%
Do male nurses bring in-class competitiveness?		
Yes	247	70.4
No	104	29.6
Do patients accept male student or actual nurses?		
Yes	247	70.4
No	104	29.6
Do nurses in services accept male student or actual nurses?		
Yes	277	80.8
No	66	19.2
What are the common problems that male nurses experience?		
Title issues	40	16.4
Bad public perception and humiliation	86	35.2
Female patients' discomfort and trouble defining their health problems	73	29.9
No support by colleagues	12	5.0
No problem	29	11.9
Lack of motivation	4	1.6

clinics. Another study reported that 44.4 percent of the students stated that male nurses could work in all medical services (Arikan et al., 2000). 70.4 percent of the participants in our study expressed that male students would promote in-class competitiveness. Similarly, 76.4 percent of the students in Arikan et al. (2000) study stated male nurses would bring in-class competitiveness. As a result, the conclusions of our study are quite similar to the literature review. The commonest problems of male students were determined to be the bad public point of view and humiliation for 35.2 percent of all the participants. The most common problems of male nurses, according to a study conducted by Soerlie et al. (1997) were found to be constant stress, low autonomy, high expectations and moral tensions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was found that more than half of the participating students preferred the nursing profession voluntarily and liked nursing for the time being. A majority of the students emphasized that they approved of male nurses' working in all medical services and that male nurses would improve the quality of patient care.

Limitations and Recommendation

More comprehensive studies could be designed in future with larger research samples the results of this study can be generalized only to nursing students of a University in

Turkey.

It could be recommended that a variety of projects and programs be organized in order to introduce the nursing profession to the public better.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to all nurse students for their participation in this research.

REFERENCES

- Al-Hussami M, Saleh MY, Hayajneh F, Abdalkader RH, Mahadeen AI (2011). The effects of undergraduate nursing student-faculty interaction outside the classroom on college grade point average. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 11(5): 320-326.
- Arikan D, Yağcı G, Karaman Z (2000). Hemşirelik Yüksekokulu Öğrencilerinin Eğitimde ve Mesleki Alanda Erkek Hemşire Adaylara Bakış Açısı, J. Atatürk Univ. School Nurs. 3(1): 36-43
- Armstrong F (2002). Not just women's business: men in nursing. *Austr. Nurs. J.* 9(11):24-26.
- Bartfay WJ, Bartfay E (2007). Canadian view of men in nursing explored. *Men Nurs.* 2(2):32-37.
- Blackman I, Margaret H, Darmawan IG (2007). Undergraduate nurse variables that predict academic achievement and clinical competence in nursing. *Int. Educ. J.* 8(2): 222-236.
- Boughan S (1994). Why do men choose nursing? *Nurs. Health Care* 15(8): 406-411.
- Christensson A, Runeson B, Dickman PW, Vaaz M (2010). Change in depressive symptoms over higher education and professional establishment — a longitudinal investigation in a national cohort of Swedish nursing students. *BMC Public Health* 10:343-354.
- Çınar N, Şahin S, Sözer C, Cevahir R, Akburak Ö (2011). Erkek Öğrencilerin Hemşirelik Mesleğini Tercih Nedenleri ve Öğrencilere Göre Hastaların Tepkisi ve Sağlık Çalışanlarının Yaklaşımı. *Fırat. J.*

- Health Serv. 6(17)
- Demiray A, Bayraktar D, Khorshid L (2013).** Erkek hemşirelik öğrencilerinin hemşireliği seçme nedenleri ve bu mesleği seçme nedeniyle yaşadıkları sorunlar. *Int. J. Hum. Sci.* 10(1):1440-1455.
- Ekstrom DN (1999).** Gender and Perceived Nurse Caring in Nurse-Patient Dyads. *J. Adv. Nurs.* 29(6):1393-1401.
- Inoue M, Chapman R, Wynaden D (2006).** Male nurses' experiences of providing intimate care for women clients. The Authors. *Journal compilation 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd.*
- Karadağ G, Güner İ, Çuhadar D, Uçan Ö (2008).** Gaziantep Üniversitesi Sağlık Yüksekokulu Hemşirelik Öğrencilerin Benlik Saygıları, *Fırat. J. Health Serv.* 3(7): 29-42.
- Kaya N, Turan N, Öztürk A. (2011).** Türkiye'de erkek hemşire imgesi. *Int. J. Hum. Sci.* 8(1): 17-30.
- Kocaer Ü, Öztıp T, Usta N, Gökçek D, Bahçecik N, Öztürk H, Paslı E (2004).** Hemşirelik Mesleğinde Erkek Üyelerin Yeri. *J. Atatürk Univ. Sch. Nurs.* 7(2): 23-29.
- Koç Z, Bal C, Sağlam Z (2013).** Hastanede Yatarak Tedavi Görmekte Olan Hastaların, Erkeklerin Hemşirelik Mesleğine Katılımları İle İlgili Görüşlerinin Belirlenmesi. Available at: http://hemsireliknew.maltepe.edu.tr/der_giler/ozel/pdf/324-329.pdf. (Accessed 18 December 2013). Maltepe Univ J. Nurs Sci. Symposium Special Issue
- Lin Y, Wang LS, Yarbrough S, Martin P (2010).** Changes in Taiwanese nursing Student values during the educational experience. *Nurs. Ethics.* 17(5): 646-654
- Purnell L (2007).** Men in nursing: an international perspective. In: O'Lynn, C., Tranbarger, R. (Eds.), *Men in Nursing. History, Challenges and Opportunities.* Springer Publishing Company, New York pp. 219-235.
- Resmi G (2007).** (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey*) Sayı: 26510. 02.05.2007 tarih ve 5634 nolu Hemşirelik Kanununda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dai Kanun (Changes in Nursing Law)
- Sochalski J (2002).** Nursing shortage redux: turning the cover on an enduring problem. *Health Affairs* 21: 157-162.
- Soerlie V, Talseth AG, Norberg A RN (1997).** Male Nurses-Reasons for Entering and Experiences of Being in the Profession *Scandinavian J. Caring Sci.* 11(2):113-118.
- Staib S, Fusner S, Consolo K (2006).** How healthy are your nursing students? *Teach. Learn. Nurs.* 1(2): 55-60.
- Tzeng Y L, Chen JZ, Tu H C, Tsai TW (2009).** Role strain of different gender nursing students in obstetrics practice: a comparative study. *J. Nurs. Res.* 17(1):1-9.
- Villeneuve M J (1994).** Recruiting and retaining men in nursing: A review of the literature. *J. Prof. Nurs.* 10(4): 217-28.
- Wang H, Li X, Hu X, Chen H, Gao Y, Zhao H, Huang L (2011).** Perceptions of nursing profession and learning experiences of male students in baccalaureate nursing program in Changsha, China. *Nurse Educ. Pract.* 31(1):36-42.
- Yiğit R, Esenay IF, Derebent E (2007).** Türkiye'de hemşirelik son sınıf öğrencilerinin profili. *Cumhuriyet Univ. J. Nurs.* 11(3): 1-12.