

Examining the Relationship Between Nursing Students' Test Anxiety and Psychosocial Well-Being

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General Overview

- Test anxiety is a familiar woe for many nursing students.
- Test anxiety is more than just feeling nervous before a test.
- Research consists of eight studies, all published within the last five years, from the database Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL).

Literature Review – Augner (2015)

- Conducted a cross-sectional study with the aim of gaining “deeper insight into the predictors of test anxiety and the degree to which nursing students are affected by it” (p. 292)
- Several variables measured with a different type of questionnaire
- Results showed strong correlation between test anxiety and four main factors
- Overall, this study “showed a strong association between test anxiety and perceived chronic stress” (p. 294)

Literature Review – Khalaila (2015)

- Conducted a descriptive-correlational study to examine the interactions among academic achievement, academic self-concept, test anxiety, and intrinsic academic motivation
- Positive correlation between academic self-concept and academic motivation
- Negative correlation between test anxiety and academic achievement
- Highly motivated students who experienced test anxiety were less likely to make poor grades

Literature Review – Custer (2018)

- Conducted a quantitative descriptive correlational study to examine the ways in which test anxiety and academic procrastination affect undergraduate nursing students
- Results suggested that “as GPA increases, academic procrastination decreases” (p. 162)
- It can be inferred “that nursing students with higher GPAs are more intrinsically motivated” than nursing students with lower GPAs (p. 163)
- Results support that students use procrastination as coping mechanism

Literature Review – Astrês Fernandes, Rocha Vieira, Silva, Silva Dantas Avelino, & Marques Santos (2018)

- Results showed that nursing students were almost four times as likely to be depressed, compared to other university students
- When assessed for depression, 25.2% of nursing students had mild symptoms, while 10.9% had moderate symptoms
- “When compared with other university students, nursing students have additional factors that may cause anxiety: the clinical practice experience, the relationship with the patient, the distress and the fear of making mistakes... Besides facing a heavy academic overload and an increasingly competitive environment, they must strive for academic excellence to meet the demands from the labor market” (p. 2170).

Literature Review – Various Sources

- A study involving aromatherapy hand massages found “no statistical differences” in levels of test anxiety between those who received aromatherapy hand massage and those who did not (Farner, Reed, Abbas, Shmina, & Bielawski, 2019, p. 229).
- A study involving inhaled lemon essential oil found no statistically significant changes in degree of test anxiety between control group and experimental group (Johnson, 2019).
- An integrative review of multiple studies noted that strategies for effectively reducing nursing student test anxiety may include aromatherapy, music therapy, hypnotherapy, and relaxation training (Brodersen, 2017).
- A mixed methods study found that use of relaxation techniques led to a decrease in test anxiety (Manansingh, Tatum, & Morote, 2019).

Ways to Address Test Anxiety

- Areas in need of more research:
 - Factors contributing to nursing student test anxiety
 - Individualized symptoms of test anxiety
 - Correlation between test anxiety and depressive symptoms
- The goal for alleviating nursing student test anxiety needs to be treating the underlying cause, which is the anxious thoughts themselves.
 - Negative outlook vs. positive outlook
 - Meeting with a professional

Effects of Chronic Anxiety

- Loss of sleep
- Stress eating
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Excessive smoking
- Neglecting social relationships
- Developing sedentary lifestyle

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