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Analysis of Cultural Encounter of the Senior and Junior Student Nurses

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Background: Cultural diversity is a challenge that all healthcare workers face worldwide. Cultural encounters should have been included in nursing curricula to improve nurses' cultural competence in the face of this challenge.

Objectives: To analyze the level of cultural encounter of the first year (junior) and third year students (senior), who were studied in the School of Nursing, Kurunegala & Vavuniya and to identify how current nursing education is underpinned to improve cultural encounter of student nurses.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in nursing schools in Kurunegala and Vavuniya, Sri Lanka. According to the Rao Soft online calculator, 150 first-year students and 150 third-year students from both schools were recruited using the technique of systematic random sampling. A pre-tested, validated self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data and data were analyzed using SPSS software version 22.0.

Results: The response rate was 100%. In both the senior and junior batches, the majority of the sample (n=300) were females, Sinhalese, and Buddhists. The mean score of the cultural encounter of senior student nurses was 3.92 (± 0.28) and the mean score of the cultural encounter of beginners was 3.63 (± 0.44). The independent sample t-test results revealed that there was no significant relationship between student nurses' learning years (senior or junior) and cultural encounters ($p=0.067$).

Conclusions: Cultural encounters were at the moderate level of the first-year student nurses along with senior student nurses and there was no significant relationship between the learning year and the level of encounter. Since cultural encounters are a critical component of improving healthcare workers' cultural competence, it is recommended that nursing curricula be evaluated to identify available opportunities for cultural encounters for student nurses, and nursing curricula be expanded to provide more opportunities for student nurses to engage in cultural experiences.

Keywords: *Cultural encounter, Junior student nurse, Senior student nurse*