



Abstracts of Poster Session PA – Biological Sciences

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Perception of educational environment of undergraduate nursing students in Sri Lanka: Effect of gender

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Introduction: A considerable increase in male admission into the nursing profession demands a better understanding of gender influences on nursing education and practice. The aim of this research was to examine students' perceptions of the educational environment created by a new nursing curriculum before any changes were made to remedy problems.

Objectives: The objective of this report is to assess the understanding of gender sensitivity in nursing education and practice and to explore how male and female nursing students perceive the new educational environment in Sri Lanka.

Methods: A prospective study using the already validated Dundee Ready Education Environment (DREEM) questionnaire was administered to all B.Sc. Nursing undergraduates enrolled in the academic years 2008/9 (first batch) and 2009/10 (second batch) respectively. The DREEM questionnaire consisting of 50 items scored on a 0-4 Likert scale was completed by 55 nursing students.

Results: The mean (SD) DREEM scores were 112 (15.6) and 106.9 (15.4) for the male and female nursing undergraduates ($p=0.22$) indicating relative satisfaction with the perceived environment. The male undergraduates academic self perception more towards the positive side (mean score of 19.50 (2.27) whereas the females (mean score of 17.16 (3.52); $p=0.005$) felt towards the negative side. The first batch female students' social self perception (mean score of 13.65) was significantly low when compared with second batch female nursing students (mean score of 15.40; $p=0.02$). The second batch male students were having overall high perception (mean score of 118.2) when compared with same batch female undergraduates (mean score of 107.8; $p=0.06$).

Conclusions: This study tool identified areas of concern within a Sri Lankan Nursing School. Further use of the DREEM as a monitoring tool would be useful to re-evaluate the environment following appropriate intervention.