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**Factors Associated with Adjustment to the New Learning Environment  
among First Year Nursing Students at Government Nursing Schools in  
Northern and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka**

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**Background:** Adjustment to the nursing school environment as a freshman is crucial for the future academic progress and a successful career and life of an individual. To be an effective nurse in the future, the new students should enjoy optimal level of psychological and physical well-being, spiritual sense of serving the society and best practice of study and work.

**Objectives:** To assess the factors associated with adjustment to the new learning environment by first year nursing students at Government nursing schools in Northern and Eastern provinces, Sri Lanka.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross sectional study among randomly selected sample of 420 first year nursing students from Schools of Nursing, Ampara, Batticaloa, Jaffna and Vavuniya, was conducted using a pre-tested self-administered questionnaire consisting academic, social, personal and institutional factors that affect adjustment to the new environment. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and associations were assessed using the Mann Whitney U test with non-parametric data. Significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Ethical clearance was obtained from the ERC in International Institute of Health Sciences, Walisara, Sri Lanka.

**Results:** Response rate was 99.5%. The majority (53.1%) was 21-22 years old. The mean age was 22.5 (SD 1.07). Majority of nursing students were female (75.7%), Sinhalese and Buddhist (55%). Of the sample 53.8% had never received psychological support and academic assistance (48.1%) in the school. Adjusting with heavy workload (62.5%), applying clinical skills (62.5%), socializing (60.61%), regular attendance to the clinical training (70.2%) and receiving learning support (60.2%) were perceived as the most difficult in their adjustment. Overall personal, emotional factors (67%) reported as the most difficult in adjustment during the first academic year. There was no statistical significance between adjustment factors and socio demographic variables ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Conclusions:** The personal emotional factors were found to affect greatly to the adjustment in the first academic year. Continuous learning support, supervision and socialization programs need to be strengthened in nursing school environment and in the clinical learning environment for the beginners.

**Keywords:** *Academic factors, Clinical learning, Learning environment, Personal factors, Socializing*