

## *SAUDI NURSING STUDENT'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE NURSING PROFESSION*

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### **Abstract**

#### **Introduction:**

Saudi Arabia, like many areas of the world, is challenged by a nursing shortage. The World Health Organization (2004), reported that there is only 40 nurses for every 10,000 of the Saudi Arabia population. In 2010, it was found that there is a chronic nursing shortage of 30% that is worsened by heavy migration of nurses. Community image, family disagreement, cultural and communal values, long working hours, mixing with members of the opposite gender, and the worry of not being a "marriageable" prospect were the main reasons why Saudi females did not choose nursing as a career.

Saudi Arabian society is divided in its view of the nursing profession. Nursing is not considered a respectable profession for women in Saudi Arabia, despite its long respected history during the period of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) (Mansour, 1994). In 1991, nursing was ranked last in the list of appropriate occupations for women (Jackson and Gary, 1991). Reasons for this low ranking included the type of work, inadequate financial rewards and working hours. Working hours are prohibitive for some women as they must fulfill obligations of the wife and mother role (Tumulty, 2001).

**Objectives:** To explore the attitudes among the Saudi nursing students towards the nursing profession. In addition, the study aims to identify students' perception of causes preventing them from becoming nurses. It also aims to determine the factors influencing the Saudi nursing students' choice of nursing profession.

**Methodology:** This study was carried out in College Of Nursing Riyadh (CON-R) – King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences (KSAU-HS). The study subjects included 150 nursing students who were enrolled in the four Academic years and internship year within the academic years 2012/2013 subjects were invited to participate in the study. The participation was voluntary and anonymous and the purpose of the study was fully explained before gaining the participants' consent.

**Tools:** Instruments of data collection includes:

**Part I.** It includes items related to socio demographic characteristics subjects such as age, marital status, sex and academic year; beside to questions explore the subject information about the reasons behind choosing the nursing profession and their families' attitudes.

**Part II.** The Attitude Scale for Nursing Profession developed by Coban and Kasikci (2011) was adopted in surveying the nursing students' attitudes toward nursing profession. The scale is composed of 40 items; each item is rated on a five point likert scale from 1 to 5.

**Design:** A descriptive design was utilized to identify the nursing student's attitude toward nursing profession.

**Results:** Findings revealed that majority of nursing students 77.5 % ranged in age from 20 to 24 years. 82.2% were single. Thirty four percent of nursing students indicated that the reason behind choosing the nursing profession that the nursing is her own interest while 21% of nursing students enrolled in the nursing program as a result of their grades in the secondary high school, followed by 18.4% perceived nursing profession as an opportunity to improve their financial situation. Also it showed that nursing students who were less than 20 years have negative attitude toward nursing profession while 82.4% who were between 20 to 24 yrs had a positive attitude. The majority of students 80.4% staying in central region had positive attitude toward nursing profession and 63.4 had a negative attitude. More than two thirds of Saudi nursing students 67.1% were found to have positive attitude toward nursing profession.

**Conclusion:** The attitudes of Saudi nursing students tended to be positive towards nursing profession. On the other hand, the negative attitudes towards nursing profession held by the minority of the students were related to young age and lack of knowledge about the profession.

**Key words:** Nursing profession – nursing students – Attitudes.