

ABSTRACT

Background

The training of nurses involves theory and practical teaching and both components are important in equipping nurses with knowledge, attitudes in relation to clinical skills in order to bring about competencies to provide quality care. Although it is required of the hospital based healthcare providers to participate in clinical teaching, it has been noted that most of them rarely participate in clinical teaching of nursing students. The aim of this study was to assess the factors affecting the acquisition of clinical skills by the student nurses in the clinical setting at Mulago National Referral Hospital.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study design was employed on a sample of 118 nursing and midwifery students from all years of study and a simple random sampling technique using students' registration numbers was used. In-depth key informants' interview and FGDs were conducted with tutors and nursing staff from the school and hospital respectively. Data was analyzed using univariate and bivariate using SPSS version 18.0 computer soft-ware.

Results

A total of 118 out of a sample of 145 students participated, with a male to female ratio of 1:3, and a 2-fold nurse to midwives ratio. There was a 1:1 number of students affected and unaffected by fees in CSA. These effects included missing lessons (28.1%), being divided between work and school (45.6%) and taking care of other family members (26.3%). Staff involvement in clinical training was low with just a few (64%), none (29%) and all (7%), this results into effects like irregular teaching (66.7%). The relationship between clinical instructors and students was generally good (80.7%). Majority of students reported working on more than 10 patients/clients a day and this was associated with exhaustion stress instead of increased learning opportunity. The administrative challenges included lack of adequate

supervision (48.3%), inadequate time allocated for clinical placement (25.4%), unclear objectives of the clinical experience (7.6%) and interrupted attendance due to fees demand (2.5%).

Conclusion and recommendations

Generally there were several factors that compromised the quality of skills acquisition including institutional and students' individual factors. There was inadequate attention by preceptors to help students acquire clinical skill, and the students' financial burden has greatly affected students learning process. This study recommended that; the training school should conduct training of preceptor, establish accelerated supervisory system, and ensure delivery of adequate theoretic coverage before clinical placement as well as providing clear objectives and an interactive coordination between the clinical instructors training institution. More so an economically and socially friendly environment should be designed for post-basic trainees by curriculum developing agencies.