

can result in making the nursing profession unattractive to the males in secondary school where peer influence is strong. Making the nursing profession attractive to young people also requires that it is viewed as a financially rewarding prospect as this serves as an incentive for prospective nurses. In terms of incentives to work only 41.6% of the respondents in this study believed that nurses earned a lot of money. An overall assessment of perception in this study showed that a majority of the students surveyed had **positive** perception (93%) towards nursing as a profession. Similarly, the respondents in a study carried out by on Adolescents' perception of career choice of Nursing among selected secondary school in Jos², Nigeria showed a positive perception of nursing majority of the respondents (91.25%) agreed that nurses are respected and valued by the society, 90% of the respondents' agreed that it takes intelligence to be a nurse while 47.5% agreed that "nursing is a feminine profession"

Respondents' perception towards nursing as a career for men

Although, more than half of the respondents (53%) held a **positive** perception towards Nursing as a career choice for men, half (50.2%) of the students in this study disagreed that nursing was a career choice for females only. However it was the view of as much as 37.9% of the students that nursing was not a masculine type of career for males to pursue. It was the view of 65.6% of respondents that nursing was more appropriate for females because they are more caring and 32.8% said nursing was not appropriate for males because they were not caring enough. The study also shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between sex of respondents and perception toward nursing as a career choice for men (p -value = 0.419). Furthermore, majority (63.4%) believed that all male nurses were gay, which for young people could have the negative effect of stigmatization. These negative perceptions expressed by secondary school students are also sometimes enhanced at different levels of the social system such as at the family or community level. For instance, in this study although more than half of the respondents (53.2%) held positive perception towards nursing as a career choice for men, less than half of the students surveyed agreed that they would encourage a male family member to become a nurse. However in a study on attitude and perception towards men in nursing education in which the respondents consists of nursing and non-nursing students, majority of the respondents agreed that nursing is not a masculine type of career for male to pursue and there is a general perception that female nurses are more caring and nurturing when compared to male nurses¹⁴.

Conclusion

There was a general positive perception towards Nursing as a career as majority of the respondents were of the view that nurses play important role in preventing disease in the community. Also, nurses were viewed as respected and valued by society by more than two-thirds of the study population. Although, more than half of the respondents (53.2%) held positive perception towards nursing as a career choice for men, it was the view of majority of respondents that nursing was more appropriate for females because they are more caring and less than half of the students surveyed agreed that they would encourage a male family member to become a nurse and majority of the respondents agreed that all male nurses are gay. In conclusion, there is a need for secondary students to be aware of what nursing as a profession entails and that gender is not a determining factor of being a better nurse.

Nursing implications

The findings of this study have practical implication for the nursing education, practice and research. The perception that nursing is a feminine profession is reinforced in the findings of this studies and so adequate awareness that Nursing as a career provides them with opportunity to help and care for others either as a male or a female. Modern healthcare delivery requires a multidisciplinary approach in order to be effective. It is therefore important to emphasize the value of team work in the decision making process of patient care at the level of the practicing nurse as well as at the secondary school level where the next generation of nurses can be attracted. Organizing programs and advertisements that portray both male and female nurses in a variety of settings, demonstrating their professionalism as nurses and their caring ability are required.

Recommendations

Nursing as a career for both males and females should be strongly incorporated in career counseling in secondary schools in order to increase awareness and foster positive perception towards nursing. Nursing department of various academic institutions should admit more males into the institution while the Nursing and midwifery council should take measures to stop the media negative portrayal of nursing as a feminine profession.

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