School of Nursing and Midwifery

Project 28: Demographics and participation rate of African migrant women in breast and cervical cancer screening program in New South Wales.

Project 29: Does the expanded English language acculturation scale differentiate and predict academic performance of nursing students?

Project 30: “Student literacy Strategies: School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Western Sydney” H9284 - Three year research project in School of Nursing & Midwifery aimed at responding to the literacy development needs of undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students.

Project number: 28

Project title: Demographics and participation rate of African migrant women in breast and cervical cancer screening program in New South Wales.

Supervisory panel: Dr Olayide Ogunsiji and Professor Lesley Wilkes

Contact information for supervisor

Dr Olayide Ogunsiji (02) 4570 1897 o.ogunsiji@uws.edu.au

Project description

Breast and cervical cancer are the most common cancers and among the leading cause of deaths in women internationally (Ferlay et al. 2010, American Cancer Society 2011). In order to prevent deaths from breast and cervical cancer, Australia has implemented national population screening programs for early detection, diagnosis and intervention (AIHW 2010). These screening programs include BreastScreen Australia which uses mammography for screening, and the national cervical screening program that utilises vaccination and Papanicolaou (Pap) testing, sometimes referred to as a pap smear (AIHW 2010). Breast cancer screening is free to the target population of 50-69 year old women but women aged 40-49 years and over 70 years are eligible for screening. Cervical screening, targets 20-69 years old women and those who have been sexually active are encouraged to commence the screening between 18-20 years (AIHW 2010). Australia aims for 100% participation and women who fall into the target group are expected to access breast and cervical screening every two years (AIHW 2010).

However, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are less likely to attend screening programs and the magnitude of this problem among African women is not reported. With a growing population of African women migrating to Australia, there is need to know the demographics and their participation rate in
cancer screening. This information is important in understanding the magnitude of the problem which will inform appropriate intervention, and the demographic information will provide a valid basis for targeted cancer awareness and screening programs.

This descriptive study will utilise secondary data from BreastScreen New South Wales and Papsmear Register to present the demographics and participation rate of African migrants in breast and cervical screening in New South Wales. It is consistent with the research carried out in the School of Nursing and Midwifery on acute, chronic and rehabilitative health.

**Project aims**

To report the demographics and participation rate of African migrant women in breast and cervical cancer screening in NSW.

**Project methods**

This descriptive study will utilise secondary data from BreastScreen New South Wales and Papsmear Register to identify the demographics and participation rate of African migrants in breast and cervical screening in New South Wales. The student is expected to go through the screening records of BreastScreen New South Wales and Papsmear Register and retrieve information about the demographics and participation rate of African migrant women who have participated in these programs since their commencement in 1991. The student will then be expected to write up the findings which will be developed by the supervisors for publication and grant applications.

**Students are to have the following skills to apply**

Students need to be at least in their Second year second semester Bachelor of Nursing program with a minimum GPA of 5.2. Knowledge of descriptive statistics is beneficial.
**Project number:** 29

**Project title:** Does the expanded English language acculturation scale differentiate and predict academic performance of nursing students?

**Supervisory team:** A/Professor Yenna Salamonson, Dr Bronwyn Everett, and Dr Paul Glew

**Contact information for supervisor**

Associate Professor Yenna Salamonson (02) 4620 3322 y.salamonson@uws.edu.au

**Project description**

In Australia and other English-speaking countries, nursing students with low levels of English language proficiency underperform clinically and academically (Rogan et al., 2006; Salamonson et al., 2008). Although international students are required to meet a minimum standard in each of the four language components (listening, reading, writing and speaking) to receive a university offer, this is not a requirement for domestic students who may have English as an additional language (EAL). It is not surprising that a number of universities have implemented various diagnostic tools of post-entry English language assessments, to identify and provide support to students who are most at risk of academic underperformance due to a lack of English language proficiency (Office of Learning & Teaching, 2011).

**Significance of the study**

A brief self-report tool, the English Language Acculturation Scale (ELAS), has been shown to have predictive validity in identifying EAL students who may be at risk of academic underperformance (Salamonson et al., 2008). Despite its utility, three of the five ELAS items are related to speaking and the tool does not include any item related to the writing or listening domains. This study is the development and testing of the expanded ELAS, a tool that contains items to assess all four language components: speaking, reading, listening and writing.

**Project aim**

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship of the four language components and academic performance among nursing students. This project also aims to test the sensitivity of this expanded scale in detecting and discriminating levels of academic performance across the different levels of English language usage among nursing students.

**Project methods**

This project will involve two phases.
Phase 1: A systematic literature review, which addresses all four language components and their relationships to academic performance. Phase 2: A prospective correlational design will be used to examine the association between the expanded ELAS and the academic performance of nursing students to evaluate if this tool is a more sensitive instrument for identifying and discriminating the relationship between the four components of English language usage (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and academic performance, controlling for sociodemographic factors.

The student may be involved in one or both of these phases.

References


Rogan, F., San Miguel, C., Brown, D., Kilstoff, K., 2006. 'You find yourself.' Perceptions of nursing students from non-English speaking backgrounds of the effect of an intensive language support program on their oral clinical communication skills. Contemporary Nurse 23 (1), 72-86.

Project number: 30

Project title: “Student literacy Strategies: School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Western Sydney” H9284 - Three year research project in School of Nursing & Midwifery aimed at responding to the literacy development needs of undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students.

Supervisory team: Dr Paul Glew, Dr Kathleen Dixon, Dr Sharon Hillege

Contact information for supervisor

Dr Paul Glew (02) 4570 1163 p.glew@uws.edu.au

Project description

The project is located as a strategic area of research with a focus on academic literacy interventions at undergraduate and postgraduate levels within the School of Nursing and Midwifery. This project aligns with the School and UWS Hub for Literacy and Language to respond to the literacy development needs of undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students. This project aims to develop and evaluate strategies aimed at facilitating the literacy development of nursing students. The Student Literacy Strategies pilot project for undergraduate programs commenced in 2010. The research involving the strategies was developed throughout 2011 to 2013 and will be extended for postgraduate programs until February 2015.

The researchers are conducting a pilot project for postgraduate programs for an Office of Learning and Teaching grant proposal that will assess the validity and effectiveness of academic literacy interventions and assessment tools for nursing students that measure the extent and level of improvement in academic literacy skills.

The proposed supervisor is Dr Paul Glew, an Early Career Researcher and Senior Lecturer at SoNM with research experience in academic English, literacy programs, and clinical nursing communication. He has supervised students engaged in projects with the UWS Centre for Education Research on an externally funded evaluative study for Citi Australia and YWCA NSW. He is a recipient of the UWS Vice-Chancellor’s Excellence Award in Teaching (2012) for the Academic Literacy Strategies implementation team, School of Nursing and Midwifery and Student Learning Unit.

The proposed co-supervisor is Dr Kathleen Dixon, an Early Career Researcher, Senior Lecturer and Director of Academic Workforce (Hawkesbury Campus) and Unit Coordinator for the postgraduate unit Leadership in Clinical Practice. Kathleen is a highly experienced educator and manager with extensive knowledge and interest in both undergraduate and postgraduate nursing education. Her areas of research are postgraduate literacy, clinical leadership, professional regulation, codes
and disciplinary inquiries, Primary Health Care and the older adult, and Foucauldian and poststructural research methods.

The proposed mentor for the supervisor and co-supervisor is Dr Sharon Hillege, Senior Lecturer, Academic Course Advisors and Literacy Coordinator for SoNM. She will oversee the project as the literacy coordinator and member of the UWS Academic English literacies expert advisory group. She has publications in refereed journals and has spoken at many conferences, is an author and editor of Fundamentals of Nursing & Midwifery: Australia & New Zealand and recipient of the UWS Vice-Chancellor’s Excellence Award in Teaching (2012) for the Academic Literacy Strategies implementation team, School of Nursing and Midwifery and Student Learning Unit.

Project aim

The aim of this project is to determine whether the literacy support strategies (LSS) are effective in meeting the literacy needs of undergraduate and postgraduate nursing students. The project will:

- Review literature on methods and tools used in higher education to assess the academic literacy of students, particularly among undergraduate and postgraduate students from the health science disciplines
- Evaluate the performance of nursing students using existing assessment data to examine the areas of deficits in literacy skills and the support interventions

Project method

Mixed method study using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and student results. This involves:

- Students engaged in the literacy support strategies will report their literacy needs are being or have been met.
- Students engaged in the literacy support strategies will record academic literacy, assessment results and communication skills.

The results of this project will guide development of further literacy strategies.

Students are required to have the following skills to apply

The research student will be managing de-identified data using ID only, and will also be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The research project that the student will complete in the 8 weeks with involves having the ability to:

1. Literature search and import of literature into designated Endnote files
   - Work with the researchers and the UWS Librarian to identify published studies for inclusion in a review of the literature on postgraduate literacy
   - Enter the identified references and build a new EndNote Library a review paper
   - Read, make notes and code identified published papers for inclusion in discussion with the researchers
   - Build a summary table of the literature using heading determined by the researchers
2. Data entry on the performance of nursing students in the program:
   - Data entry of de-identified data
   - Compilation of responses from the Likert Scales into SPSS 20
   - Entry of interview data into NVivo10 for thematic analysis
   - Compilation of open-ended responses into Excel spreadsheets

The benefits for the research student in this project include:

- Develop proficiency in literature searches using various databases, with assistance and support from the researchers and the UWS School Librarian
- Skills consolidation in the use of EndNote Referencing package, which will be beneficial for his/her Honours or future research degrees
- Potential opportunities for co-authorship in a paper that the research student will be working on for the literature search and review. Participation in completion of the paper would occur outside of the 8 week period and would be unpaid involving the student’s willingness to contribute to completion of the paper for journal submission and peer review for publication.
- Will provide the assigned research student with a written reference at the end of the 8 week program
- Develop knowledge of SPSS statistical software and NVivo data entry.

Project implementation plan – The research student could commence in the first week of December 2013 and complete the work by the second week of February 2014. This will allow for a 2 week break and UWS closed period for Christmas and New year public holidays.