Clinical decision-making styles and critical thinking skills among general care nurses in Malaysia

The aim of this study is to assess the relationships between critical thinking skills and types of clinical decision-making among general care nurses in Malaysia. This quantitative descriptive correlational study was conducted in nine public hospitals from Peninsular Malaysia. Five hundred and forty nine nurses recruited via multistage cluster sampling, completed the demographic data questionnaire, Health science reasoning test (HSRT) and 24-item Nursing Decision-making instrument (24-NDM). The results of the study show that nurses' average HSRT score was 13.8±3.4 which meant the majority of them failed to manifest critical thinking skills. In addition, the results show that 65.2% of the nurses studied were more inclined in making quasi-rational decisions, with 24.6% inclined towards analytical-systematic decisions, whereas only 10.2% displayed intuitive-interpretive decisions ( =268, df=2, p<0.001). With multinomial logistic regression, only education qualification is significantly associated with the nurses' critical thinking score, whereas years of working experience and education qualification significantly predicted types of clinical decision nurses made (p<0.001). Finally, there is significant positive relationship between critical thinking skills and clinical decision-making, which accentuates the positive results yielded from previous studies. This finding provides further evidence that critical thinking and clinical decision-making are both interrelated. Since clinical decision-making cannot be easily taught in nursing curricula, cultivating critical thinking among nursing students perhaps is the right remedy for producing future nurses who can make effective clinical decisions.

Biography
Khatijah Lim Abdullah has completed her Doctorate from the University of Southampton UK. She is currently a Professor in Nursing in University of Malaya, Malaysia and Vice President for Qualitative Research Association Malaysia. She has published more than 50 papers in reputed journals and is presently the Chief Editor for Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research.

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