

STAFF NURSE PERCEPTIONS OF CARING BEHAVIORS

Margaret Torres, RN BSN MSN
Wellstar Kennestone Hospital
677 Church Street Marietta, Georgia 30060

[Key words: caring, acute care nurses, perceptions]

Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this paper was to identify perceived caring behaviors of nurses who care for patients in an acute care setting and to determine if there is a difference between RNs and LPNs in their perceptions of caring.

Method

This study used a quantitative, descriptive study involving 140 RNs and LPNs practicing in an acute care setting at four secondary care hospitals within a single hospital system. The tool used in this study was the Caring Behaviors Inventory (CBI) (Wolf, 1986), developed to measure caring behaviors.

Findings

All 42 of the caring behaviors on the CBI were perceived as important. No one behavior scored less than 4.75 out of 6. The behavior that ranked highest was “showing respect for the patient” with a mean score of 5.86. The 42 behaviors on the CBI are categorized based on common themes into 5 dimensions. The highest ranked dimension was “respectful deference to the other” with a mean score of 5.53. There was a significant difference between the mean scores of only 4 of the behaviors between the RNs and the LPNs.

Discussion

All of the nurses that participated in this study perceive caring behaviors as important; more specifically nurses perceive caring behaviors as important in their role as a nurse. Regardless of the shift the nurse works, educational preparation of the nurse, or the nurses’ ethnicity all the participants perceive caring behaviors as important. All of the behaviors scored relatively high. This validates Watson’s theory of human care on which the CBI was developed. Watson’s theory discusses relationships that are necessary between the patient and nurse for human care to be present. All of the behaviors of the CBI call for that interaction and the nurses scored them as important.