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## *Nursing students' anxiety level during clinical training*

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## **Abstract:**

Quality is a primary concern of health care agencies worldwide. A conducive clinical training environment is essential for nursing students to be capable of enhancing their learning experiences and achieving the desired training outcomes. This study aimed to examine the satisfaction and anxiety levels during clinical training among nursing students. A descriptive -analytical cross-sectional study design was utilized. The data was gathered via a structured questionnaire including the socio-demographic characteristics and nursing students' satisfaction with the hospital and laboratory training. Additionally, Self-Rating Anxiety Scale (SAS) was adopted to measure the anxiety level. The undergraduate nursing students had a high level of satisfaction with their clinical training at the hospitals and laboratories. Moreover, they had mild anxiety related to hospital and laboratory clinical training.

Developing clinical orientation and training programs and improvement strategies to enhance the effectiveness of the clinical training environment. The establishment of a modern, tastefully designed, and fully stocked skill lab for the college's student training should receive more attention.

## **Keywords:**

Satisfaction, Anxiety, Clinical training, Nursing students.

## 1. Introduction:

Learning premises have been identified as an important factor defining the success of an effective teaching program. The learning environment's atmosphere is a critical component of a successful learning process. Academically, nursing and other related field students learn from classes and clinical teaching environments in order to achieve clinical learning outcomes. One of the critical factors influencing clinical education quality is students' exposure to and preparation for entering the clinical setting.

Clinical practice is critical in nursing and medical education because it prepares nursing and medical students to apply what they learn in real theories in clinical practice. It also helps students develop critical thinking skills for problem-solving. Furthermore, it prepares student nurses to be capable of "doing" as well as "knowing" clinical principles in practice. Furthermore, the clinical setting was intended to shape future professional nurses who master core competencies of the profession. This goal is attained through the key factors contributing to successful clinical teaching, including clinical supervision, clear role definition, and a supportive environment that encourages students to engage in active learning.

Satisfaction refers to the extent to which students are happy with their learning environment. Students' satisfaction as an outcome of the educational process should be of concern to professional education faculties because it has been linked to their later professional attitudes, career commitment, and retention. Teaching faculty should be concerned about students' dissatisfaction with the educational process.

According to Fava et al., anxiety is the brain's and body's reaction to all demands. It has both positive and negative effects on one's health and well-being. Anxiety is classified into two categories: state and trait. Individuals' perception of their current situation as threatening and dangerous leads to state anxiety. In general, it is regarded as temporary and common anxiety that everyone experiences. Trait anxiety, on the other hand, is not caused by external threats; rather, it arises from within a person. Trait anxiety is a personality trait unrelated to a person's current situation. Anxiety can also be used to motivate people to perform, such as when studying for an exam.

Nursing education is a difficult/stressful educational process because theoretical knowledge and practice are complementary to each other. In nursing, clinical experience has been shown to increase anxiety, which may affect students' training. According to the studies, approximately 15–20% of students have a high level of anxiety, with more than 30% of nursing

students having a high level of anxiety. This situation arises as a consequence of the fact that nursing students, unlike students in other professions, face higher pressure as a result of their mistakes causing harm to patients, and their professional lives are threatened. It is well known that low levels of anxiety obligate people to be more careful and strengthen training, whereas high levels of anxiety have a negative impact on clinical training.

Additionally, nursing students experience clinical anxiety because many institutes fail to perform well in their students' coping mechanisms, resulting in their students' overall training level remaining low. Thus, it is clear that anxiety has an impact on training, and clinical anxiety, in particular, discourages nursing students. This anxiety may be related to the fact that nursing students must maintain a certain grade point average in order to continue in their highly competitive nursing programs. Furthermore, today's nursing students are frequently non-traditional students who are juggling school and work, and many have their own families.

According to the most recent systematic review in the KSA context, nursing students face moderate to high stress during clinical training due to heavy workloads and patient care. According to the reports, nursing students are most stressed while caring for patients, and this is also a period when they are burdened by case studies and theoretical curriculum components.

Friendly communication, interpersonal relationships (staff versus students), and capable of supporting students as learners who can contribute to the quality of care can all be signs of a supportive environment. Identifying problems and challenges that these students face in the clinical learning environment can assist stakeholders in resolving these issues and contributing to their professional development as well as their professional survival.

## **2. Methods:**

### **2.1. Research aim and questions:**

This study aimed to examine the satisfaction and anxiety levels during clinical training among nursing students. With this in mind, the subsequent study questions were posed:

1. What is the level of nursing students' satisfaction with clinical training?
2. What is the level of anxiety among students regarding clinical training?
3. If any, what is the relationship between students' satisfaction/anxiety levels and some of their elected demographic variables?

4. Is there a relationship between student satisfaction and anxiety levels regard to the clinical training?

## 2.2. Type of study:

A descriptive -analytical cross-sectional study was used. This study, on its part, is suitable for obtaining reliable data that make it possible to generate robust conclusions and create new hypotheses that can be investigated with recent research.

## 3. Results:

According to the socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, educational level, department, and residence) of 1052 participating students enrolled in two faculties of nursing the mean age of the participating students was  $21.9 \pm 1.83$  years, more than half (56.9%) of them were females and almost half (47.5%) recruited from the fourth academic level. The high percentages of the students are unmarried and come from rural area (90.8% and 67.2%, respectively) (Table.1).

*Table. 1: Distribution of the studied sample based on their socio-demographic characteristics (N = 1052)*

Socio-demographic Characteristics	N = 1052	%
Age (years) Mean $\pm$ SD	21.9 $\pm$ 1.83	
▪ 18–20	88	8.4
▪ 21–22	894	85
▪ 22–24	70	6.6
Sex		
▪ Female	620	56.9
▪ Male	432	43.1
Academic year		
▪ 3 <sup>rd</sup>	196	18.6

Socio-demographic Characteristics	N = 1052	%
▪ 4 <sup>th</sup>	500	47.5
University		
▪ Assiut	644	61.2
▪ Bisha	408	38.8
Subjects		
▪ Maternal/Pediatric Nursing	542	51.5
▪ Community health, Mental health and Geriatric Nursing	510	48.5
Marital status		
▪ Married	97	9.2
▪ Unmarried	955	90.8
Residence		
▪ Urban	345	32.8
▪ Rural area	707	67.2

Table.2 reveals that more than two thirds (64.8% / 63.4% and 70.1% / 60.7%) of the studied students reported that they feel comfortable while performing the evaluation in the hospital and laboratory training and in explaining procedures, medications and therapies respectively. Furthermore, 52% & 49.8% of them mentioned that they feel uncomfortable helping patients and their families through painful procedures in the hospital and laboratory training, respectively. While 65.1% & 59.9% of the studied students expressed that they feel comfortable while supporting patients and their families in times of crisis and grief in the hospital and laboratory training, respectively (Table.2).

*Table. 2: Distribution of students according to their satisfaction regarding hospital and laboratory training (N = 1052)*

Variables	Training site	Satisfaction Level		
		Satisfied N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Dissatisfied N (%)
I feel comfortable while performing the evaluation in the training	Hospital	682(64.8)	122(11.6)	248(23.6)
	Laboratory	667(63.4)	46(4.4)	339(32.2)
I feel comfortable in explaining procedures/ medications /therapies	Hospital	737(70.1)	139(13.2)	176(16.7)
	Laboratory	639(60.7)	198(18.8)	215(20.4)
I do not feel comfortable while giving medicines to patients	Hospital	459(43.6)	79(7.5)	514(48.9)
	Laboratory	440(41.8)	55(5.2)	557(52.9)
I feel comfortable doing procedures/ medications/therapies	Hospital	749(71.2)	287(27.3)	16(1.5)
	Laboratory	674(64.1)	125(11.9)	253(24)
I feel uncomfortable helping patients and their families through painful procedures	Hospital	410(39)	95(9)	547(52)
	Laboratory	396(37.6)	132(12.5)	524(49.8)
I feel comfortable while supporting patients and their families in times of crisis and grief	Hospital	685(65.1)	341(32.4)	26(2.5)
	Laboratory	630(59.9)	331(31.5)	91(8.7)
I am concerned about providing nursing care	Hospital	681(64.7)	116(11)	255(24.2)
	Laboratory	656(62.4)	172(16.3)	224(21.3)
I am worried about causing physical harm during this training	Hospital	697(66.3)	49(4.7)	306(29.1)
	Laboratory	668(63.5)	110(10.5)	274(26)
I am concerned about causing psychological harm to dolls during this rotation	Hospital	641(60.9)	37(3.5)	374(35.6)
	Laboratory	609(57.9)	89(8.5)	354(33.7)

Variables	Training site	Satisfaction Level		
		Satisfied N (%)	Neutral N (%)	Dissatisfied N (%)
I am concerned about causing pain to patients during this rotation	Hospital	673(64)	122(11.6)	257(24.4)
	Laboratory	651(61.9)	129(12.3)	272(25.9)
I worry about dealing with families of patients	Hospital	597(56.7)	85(8.1)	370(35.2)
	Laboratory	576(54.8)	131(12.5)	345(32.8)

According to age, the greatest prevalence of satisfaction in both hospital training and laboratory training (77.5% and 38.9%, respectively) is in the age group of 21–22 years, with a significant difference. On the other side, 1.5% and 1.1% of students above the age of 22 years were dissatisfied with their hospital training and laboratory training compared to the other two older age groups (18–20 years and 21–22 years). With regard to the difference between males and females for the results of satisfaction’s level in the hospital and laboratory training, higher percentages of satisfaction were observed among females (53.2% and 47.3% respectively) compared to males (27.9% and 14.4% respectively) with significant difference ( $P = > 0.05$ ). In contrast, male students were more dissatisfied (8.4% and 10.5%) in the hospital and laboratory training than females (2.1% and 9.1% respectively).

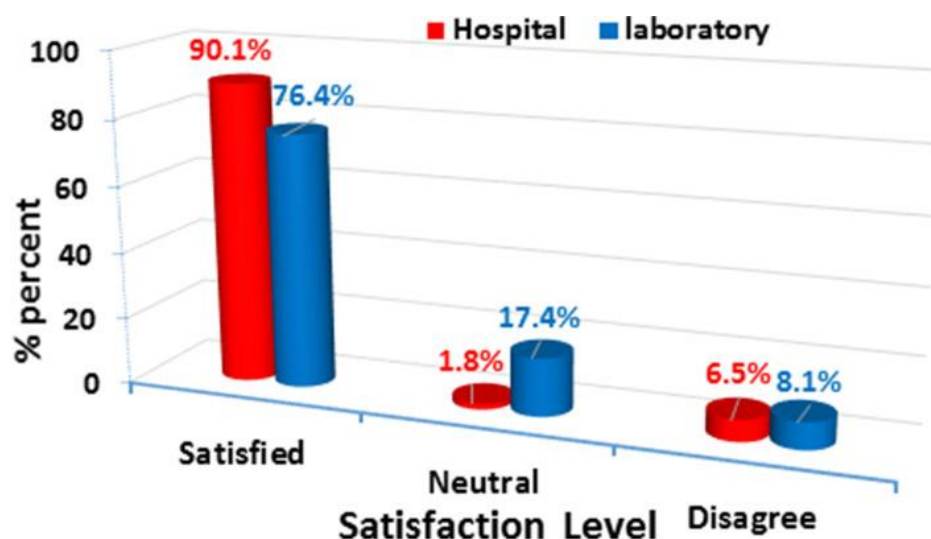


Figure. 1: Satisfaction Level of the Studied Students



Figure. 1 illustrates the overall students' satisfaction level in the hospital and laboratory training. That most of the students (90.1%) were satisfied regarding their hospital training compared with 6.5% who were not satisfied. However, the majority of the students (76.4%) were satisfied with their laboratory training compared with 8.1% who were not satisfied.

Figure. 2 denotes that more than half of the students had mild anxiety level in their hospital training and laboratory training (61.1% and 54.8%, respectively). While the percentage of sever anxiety level was higher in laboratory training than hospital training (20.1% and 12.7%, respectively).

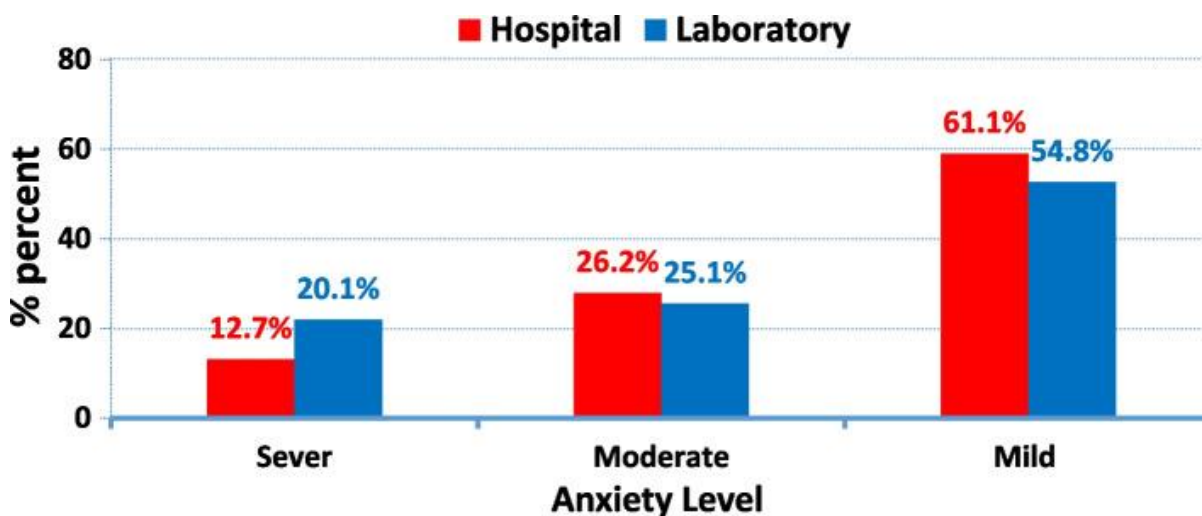


Figure. 2: Anxiety Level of the Studied Students Based on Hospital and Laboratory Training

### 3. Discussion:

This study investigated satisfaction and anxiety levels during clinical training among nursing students. At two faculty of nursing. Clinical training environments are areas of clinical education where undergraduate students can improve clinical application skills. Many challenges, difficulties, and overwhelming work, such as student tension and anxiety during clinical training, are part of the basic framework for a clinical training environment. The current study's demographic findings revealed that mean age of the studied sample was  $21.9 \pm 1.83$  years, more than half of them were females, and almost half were recruited from the fourth academic level.

Nursing teaching is practiced differently across countries. Hence, it is beneficial to understand the factors that influence students' satisfaction levels. This study explored that satisfaction in both training hospital and laboratory are significantly lower among students at Assiut

University. The students in the Saudi Arabia have a much higher satisfaction level. Different characteristics of the nursing students and difference in the curriculum may explain this finding. That the opportunities to practice different tasks are facilitating factors for students' nursing practice. The actual tasks assigned and patient care experience might be major factors determining nursing satisfaction levels.

Nursing is considered to be one of the most stressful and emotionally demanding fields which results from the gap between theory-based learning and experiences in clinical practice. The current research found that more than half of the students experienced mild anxiety during their hospital and laboratory training. These findings are congruent with a study conducted by Rodrigues Lavina et al. which showed that 83% of the students had a normal range of anxiety, while the remaining students had a moderate level of anxiety. Additionally, a similar observation noted by. Furthermore, a study conducted in KSA revealed that stress levels among nursing students during their clinical training were moderate due to various stressors. According to the current study results, the other two level of the anxiety (moderate and sever) are still high. This finding was reinforced by previous study, which stated that the clinical training is a stressful aspect of nursing students.

#### **4. Conclusion:**

According to the current study findings, the undergraduate nursing students have a high level of satisfaction with their clinical training at the hospitals and laboratories. As well they have a mild anxiety level related to hospital and laboratory clinical training. Further, there is a highly significant relationship between the satisfaction level of laboratory and hospital training and students' gender and academic level. While clinical practice provided the students with the opportunity to gain knowledge and develop skills in the preparation of caring for clients, the present findings revealed that the participants perceived it to be stressful and anxiety-producing.

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