

Original Article

Male Nurses: The Perspectives of the Hospitalized Children's Mothers

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Abstract

Background: All over the world, nursing is one of the occupations in which women are predominant. The increase in the number of male nurses reflects a change in the expectations of the society.

Aim: This descriptive study was conducted to find out the views of mothers whose children were in-patients getting treatment in hospital regarding men working as nurses.

Methods: The universe of the study consists of the mothers of children who were in-patients at the services of Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Medicine, Pediatric Hospital. The data was collected by the researches through a questionnaire developed in line with the literature. The questionnaire includes a total of 34 questions about the mothers' socio-demographic features and their views related to nurses and male nurses. Percentages and chi-square were used in the analysis of the data.

Results: 55.5% stated that nursing was not a job only for women, while 85.5% stated that male nurses should be in healthcare. 33.6% of the mothers who participated in the study stated that there should be male nurses to look after male patients and 20% stated that there should not be gender discrimination in the occupation of nursing. When the mothers who participated in the study were asked about the duties of male nurses, 20% stated that they examined patients. A statistically significant difference was found between some of the socio-demographic features of mothers and their views about male nurses working ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: It was determined that mothers' thoughts about male nurses were quite positive.

Key words: mother, occupation, nursing, gender, male nurse

Introduction

The fact that nursing is predominantly a job for women may cause people to view it as a women's job (Kleinman;2004, Turan et al;2011). Since it is thought that the care and attention given to patients is in women's nature, nursing has been accepted as a women's job until recently (Koç and Sağlam;2010). Attitudes towards nursing are changing and developing in the world and Turkey with each passing day (Turan et al;2011, Demiray et al;2012).

In our country, with the legislative regulations in 2007, gender discrimination in nursing was made to disappear and thus, men became a legal member of the nursing occupation (Demiray et al;2012, Ünver and Ürkmez;2005). After this law, the number of male nurses in our country has been on the increase. The increase in the number of male nurses represents a change in societal expectations (Ünver and Ürkmez;2005). In addition, the views of the society on the image of male nurses affect the members of the occupation or prospective members of the occupation positively or negatively. Thus, it is of

importance to determine and evaluate the male nurse image of the society.

In literature, it has been found that healthy and sick people, members of the health care team, nurses and prospective nurses stated positive views on males being a part of nursing occupation. In Turkey, there are views of adult patients, female patients, health personnel, and prospective nurses.

Aim

Since it is generally thought in our society that the care giver is a woman, mothers' views on male nurses can be different. Thus, it will be of importance to find out the views of mothers on allowing a male nurse to care for their most valuable beings, who are their children. The purpose of study is to determine the views of mothers about men working as nurses.

Research questions

A research was conducted to answer the following research question:

What is mothers opinion about male nursing?

Do the socio demographic features of the mothers in hospital affect their about male nursing?

Methods

Design

The descriptive method was used in this study.

Setting and Participants

The target population of this descriptive study consists of the mothers of children treated as inpatients at Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Medicine Pediatric Hospital and the sample of the study consists of 220 mothers who accepted to participate in the study.

Data collection

The data was collected by a questionnaire prepared by the researchers in line with the literature. A questionnaire was used for data collecting. In the first part of questionnaire, socio-demographic data of the mothers and in the second part, their thoughts and views about male nurses were demanded. The questionnaire includes a total of 14 questions about the mothers' socio-demographic features and their

views related to nursing and male nurses. After written consent was taken from the relevant institution and informed consents were taken from the mothers who participated in the study, the prepared questionnaire was conducted by male student nurses.

Data Analysis

Data were evaluated by the number, percentage, Pearson and Fisher chi-square tests using SPSS 15.0 packaged software. The level of significance set for the study was $p < 0.05$.

Research ethics

Permission was obtained from Ondokuz Mayıs University in order to conduct the study. Each mother to whom a questionnaire would be conducted was made statements about the study and consent was obtained from the mothers.

Results

A 60.9% of the mothers were between 31-40 years of age, 39.1% were primary school graduates and 80.9% were housewives. Another 50.9% of the mothers lived in the city center, incomes and expenses of %57.3 were equal in terms of financial situation and 91.4% had nuclear families (Table 1).

A 55.5% of the mothers stated that nursing was not a job only for women and 85.5% stated that male nurses should be in healthcare. 33.6% of the mothers who participated in the study stated that there should be male nurses to look after male patients, 23.6% stated that men should also take nursing jobs since it is a difficult job and 20% stated that there should not be gender discrimination in the occupation of nursing.

Of the mothers who thought that there should not be male nurses, a 17.4% stated that nursing was a job for women and 7.3% stated that nursing did not suit men. When the mothers were asked what nurses' duties were, a 84.5% said that nurses checked vital signs (listening to heart sounds, measuring blood pressure, checking temperature) and performed examinations. When the mothers were asked what male nurses' duties were, a 69.1% stated that they checked vital signs and performed examinations, a 20% stated that they treated patients and a 10.9% stated that they did everything (checking vital signs, treatment,

taking blood, dressing, examination). A 71.8% of the mothers stated that they knew there were male nurses working in hospitals. A 60.9% of the mothers stated that they learned about male

nurses when they came to hospital, 20% stated they learned from friends and relatives and a 19.1% stated that they learned about male nurses from TV, media and the internet.

Table 1: Socio-demographic features of the mothers

		n	%
Age	Between 26- 30 years of age	72	32.7
	Between 31-40 years of age	134	60.9
	Over 41 years of age	14	6.4
Level of education	Illiterate	20	9,1
	Primary school	86	39,1
	Secondary school	52	23,6
	High school- university	62	28.2
Status of work	Housewife	178	80,9
	Has a job	42	19,1
Place of residence	City	112	50,9
	Town	93	42,3
	Village	15	6,8
Status of income	Expense than income	66	30,0
	Equal income and expense	126	57,3
	More income than expense	28	12,7
Family type	Nuclear families	201	91,4
	Patriarchal family	19	8,6
Total		220	100.00

Table 2: Mothers' views about male nurses

		n	%
In your opinion, is nursing a job for women?	Yes	98	44,5
	No	122	55,5
In your opinion, should there be male nurses?	Yes	188	85.5
	No	32	14.5
If your answer is yes, why?	There should not be gender discrimination	44	20,0
	Because it is a difficult job	52	23,6
	To look after male patients	74	33,6
	No answer	50	22,7
If your answer is no, why?	because it is a job for women	39	17,4
	because it doesn't suit men	16	7,3
	Yes	165	75.0
In your opinion, what are the duties of a nurse?	Checking vital signs + Treatment	186	84,5
	Checking vital signs + dressing	12	5,5
	Checking vital signs + taking blood	14	6,4
	All	8	3,6
In your opinion, what are the duties male nurses?	Checking vital signs + treatment	152	69,1
	All	24	10,9
	Treatment	44	20,0
Do you know that male nurses are also working in hospital?	Yes	158	71,8
	No	62	28,2
Where did you learn that male nurses are working in hospital	when I came to the hospital	134	60,9
	friend+relative+family	44	20,0
	TV+internet+media	42	19,1
Total		220	100.00

Table 3: The association between some sociodemographic features of the mothers and whether they want male nurses to work

		Yes		No		X ² ,p
		n	%	n	%	
Age	Between 26- 30 years of age	60	31.9	12	37.5	*16.948
	Between 31-40 years of age	121	64.4	13	40.6	0.001
	Over 41 years of age	7	3.7	7	21.9	
Level of education	Illiterate	10	5.3	10	31.3	*23.362
	Primary school	74	39.4	12	37.5	0.001
	Secondary school	47	25.0	5	15.6	
	High school- university	57	30.3	5	15.6	
Status of work	Housewife	151	80.3	27	84.4	*0.291
	Has a job	37	19.7	5	15.6	0.589
Place of residence	City	94	50.0	18	56.3	*10.672
	Town	85	45.2	8	25.0	0.005
	Village	9	4.8	6	18.8	
Status of income	Expense than income	52	27.7	14	43.8	*8.250
	Equal income and expense	115	61.2	11	34.4	0.016
	More income than expense	21	11.2	7	21.9	
Family type	Nuclear families	172	91.5	29	90.6	**0.744
	Patriarchal family	16	8.5	3	9.4	0.544

*Pearson Chi-Square **Fisher's Exact test

Discussion

In the study, a great majority of the mothers stated that male nurses should also be in healthcare. When other studies conducted in different fractions of the society were reviewed, it was found in a study by Ünver and Ürkmez (2005), 61.4% of the participants thought nursing was a job for women. In a study by Ünsal et al (2006) which aimed to determine the views of members of different occupations (police, academics, teachers) on male nurses, it was found that 85.8% thought that men can be as good as women in nursing and it was also found that more teachers stated that men can be nurses when compared with the other occupation groups (93.4%). In Kaya et al's (2011) study which aimed to determine the society's image of male nurses, 62.6% of the participants stated that nursing is an occupation that both men and women can have. In Ekinci et al's (2014) study which assessed the attitudes of engineering faculty students towards male nurses, 44.7% of the students thought nursing was a job for women and 58.5% stated that they would like to receive nursing services from female nurses.

When studies conducted with patients were reviewed, it was found in a study by Koç et al (2010) which analyzed the attitudes of adult patients who were being treated in the hospital, it was found that 60,0% of the adult patients stated that nursing is an occupation that both genders can have. In a study by Özbaşaran et al (2002), 44.4% of the patients stated that men could also be nurses. Çelik et al.(2012) in their study found that 53.2% of the female patients (n:530) who were in gynecology clinics stated that nursing is a job for women. In Tezel et al's (2008) study, 47.8% of the patients stated that the gender of nurses is not important. In our study, mothers stated that there should be male nurses to care for patients, that there should also be male nurses since nursing is a difficult occupation and that gender discrimination should not exist in nursing.

33.6% of the mothers who participated in the study stated that there should be male nurses to look after male patients, 23.6% stated that men should also take nursing jobs since it is a difficult job and 20% stated that there should not be gender discrimination in the occupation of nursing. In Ekinci et al's (2014) study, the

answer that was most given to the question "what kind of a contribution does it make for men to join the occupation of nursing?" was "they will support female nurses in things that require physical strength" (41%). In Koç et al's (2010) study, 73.8% of the patients agreed with the thought that there will be less difficulties about the occupation when men become nurses and 92.5% of the patients agreed with the view that male nurses will help their female friends in works that require physical strength since they are capable.

Some of the mothers in the study stated that nursing is a woman's job and it does not suit men. In their study, Ahmad and Alasad (2007) found that only 3.4% of the mothers preferred male nurses and as for the reasons of this they stated that nursing suited women, male nurses could have difficulties in communicating with patients and the society could react to male nurses (Kocaer et al;2004). In Koç et al's (2010) study, it was found that 55.2% of the patients thought nursing was more suitable for women since the occupation required compassion and mercy.

When the studies on patients' attitudes about asking for care from male nurses were reviewed, a study by Lodge et al (2002) found that 28% of the patients in the gynecology service would be uncomfortable about a male nurse helping them while a study by Chur-Hansen (2002) found that 47.6% of the patients would be uncomfortable about a male nurse giving them a bath. Taşçı (2007)'s study found that 52.9% of the patients thought male nurses should care for male patients and 62% stated that they would have a problem about telling a male nurse when they experienced a problem. Demiray et al (2013) stated that 69% of the patients wanted to be cared for by male nurses and although 76.5% of the patients thought that male nurses would be good in giving care, they stated that female patients would have difficulties in telling male nurses when there was a problem. In Tezel et al.(2008)'s study, most of the patients stated that they could experience difficulties about communicating and feel ashamed and uncomfortable while receiving care from a male nurse. In this study, the mothers' statements about examining the patients as one of the duties of male nurses shows that they think of

male physicians and male students of medicine as male nurses.

A majority of the mothers stated that they knew about male nurses working in hospitals and that they found about male nurses working when they came to hospital. Ünsal et al (2010) found statistically significant differences between different occupation groups and knowing about the presence of male nurses, men working as nurses and men being nurses. They found that the significance about being aware of male nurses resulted from academic and police participants.

In our study, statistically significant associations were found between some of the sociodemographic features of mothers and their attitudes about male nurses ($p < 0.05$). Tezel et al (2008) found statistically significant differences between the patients' sociodemographic features and whether they preferred a male or a female nurse. Koç et al (2010) stated that the patients who were older than 67, who were married and primary school graduates, whose families lived in city center, whose incomes and expenses were equal and who had too many children thought that nursing was an occupation for both men and women while those who lived in towns and villages thought that nursing was an occupation only for women. In their study, Demiray et al (2013) found that illiterate patients and secondary school patients chose the expression "Nursing is an occupation for women" more than the other patients while high school graduates chose the expression "Men can also be nurses" more. Çelik et al (2012) found that the level of choosing male nurses was lower for women who had low levels of education. In line with our study, it was found that as the patients' level of education increased, their attitudes to male nurses became more positive and they accepted male nurses more.

Conclusions

In the light of the findings, it was determined that mothers' thoughts about male nurses were quite positive.

Implementation to nursing: Since nursing has been an occupation only for women for many years, it is extremely important to find out the attitudes of the society towards male nurses in terms of increasing the number of male students in nursing schools. A specific time has to pass for

members of the society to adapt to a change. Thus, in order to increase the level of awareness for the society, it is suggested to inform to the society about the contributions of male nurses through media.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

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Research expenses were met by the researchers.

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