Attitudes of nursing students towards the alcoholic patient: integrative literature review

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INTRODUCTION

Alcoholism is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a disease and is considered a public health problem. In Brazil, alcohol was associated with 69.5% in men and 42.6% of cases of liver cirrhosis in women. Association for traffic accidents was 36.7% and 23%, between men and women, respectively. In addition, about 4.2% (1.6% of whom are women and 6.9 men) of Brazilians meet criteria for abuse or dependence.

Nurses, as they are in different care settings, most likely provide assistance to this user in their work routine. Therefore, the way in which this professional assists the alcoholic can significantly influence the treatment of this individual. Thus, the nurses’ attitude towards the user can have a positive or negative impact on adherence to their treatment.

However, it is possible to perceive that the training of nurses is often translated into a negative and prejudiced attitude, hindering the interpersonal relationship with the user, and their adherence to the treatment programs offered.

The verification of attitudinal aspects still in graduation allows us to foresee the need for more effective actions for more positive behavior changes towards alcohol users, especially because the student tends to be more moldable and receptive than the professionals already inserted in the field of work.

Therefore, in order for the care provided to alcoholics to be effective, it is necessary that nurses are trained, already during their academic training process, in order to identify the problem of alcohol use without discriminatory, prejudiced attitudes, but that is faced with a health issue or any other negative character.

In this sense, evaluating attitudes towards alcoholic subjects is important in the stage of professional training and, although it has numerous definitions, the term attitude does not yet have a precise meaning. Some authors consider that attitudes are behaviors resulting from values derived from other more basic values, which, during the development process, were internalized during their childhood or daily life. In this research, the concept of attitudes is adopted as the behavior of students who permeate the care of alcoholic patients, whether these attitudes are consciously expressed or not.

Therefore, starting from the importance of investigating the discussions about the attitudes of nursing students towards alcoholic users and the relevance of integrative review in the construction of knowledge in the field of nursing, this study aims to investigate the theme in more detail, with a view to generating a broader view on the subject, enabling the application of new practices towards alcohol users.

Therefore, this study starts from the following research question: What are the nursing students’ attitudes towards alcoholic patients? In view of this, this study aimed to identify evidence available in the literature about the attitudes of nursing students towards alcoholic patients through an integrative literature review.

METHODS

It is an integrative literature review, carried out in national and international databases, including Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System online (MEDLINE); Nursing database (BденF); Latin American and Caribbean Health Sciences Literature (LILACS) and National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health (PubMed). To carry out the integrative review, the sequential steps proposed by Russell (2005) were followed, namely: formulation of the problem (1), collection of data from the literature (2), evaluation of the data (3), analysis (4) and, finally, interpretation of results (5). In addition, the validation of this stage of the research was carried out differently and validated by two researchers/authors.

The DeCS platform was used to select the descriptors, which were exchanged with the respective keywords with the Boolean mechanisms AND and OR to increase the search scope. Thus, the descriptors found were: “alcoolismo”; “conhecimento em saúde”; “attitudes”; and “prática e alunos de enfermagem”. The keywords used were: distúrbios relacionados ao álcool; álcool; alcoolismo; alunos; enfermagem; attitudes; práticas.

Articles were included that addressed the students’ attitudes with interventions or without interventions.
Only works published in Portuguese, English, Spanish with full text in the last 5 years were part of the sample. The excluded articles were those that were not relevant to the research topic, that is, that addressed the students’ attitudes in a tangential way or that approached the attitudes of nurses already graduated and not of nursing students. Duplicates in other databases and other databases and review articles were also excluded.

The guiding question was elaborated through the PICOT strategy, whose acronym represents, from each letter, the following definitions: P (population) consists of a brief, precise form of the population to be studied; I (intervention) what is the problem to be investigated; C (control) comparing one intervention with another; O (outcomes) corresponds to what should be expected; T (time) period required.

In order to analyze the evidence level of the articles, the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evolution (GRADE) method was adopted, which consists of a universal system created by a collaborative group of researchers to verify the quality, evidence and strength of the study recommendations. The quality of scientific evidence classified into four levels: high, moderate, low and very low.

A total of 15,445 articles were initially found. After applying the filters to the databases, 2,296 articles were obtained. Then, when the titles and abstracts were read, a total of 22 manuscripts was obtained, which, after being read in full, composed a final quantity of 8 articles to compose the final sample.

RESULTS

After applying the filters to the databases, 2,296 articles were obtained. 22 articles were selected to be read in full and, of these, a total of 8 articles made up the final amount. The central theme that guided the principles of eligibility of the manuscripts was based on the "attitudes of nursing students towards the alcoholic patient". Of the productions found in the final amount, 3 (38%) corresponded to national publications and 5 (63%) are international.

Regarding the 5 international publications, 3 (60%) were from the United States, followed by Mexico and Colombia (held in both countries concurrently) and Australia, with one study each. As for the level of evidence of the studies analyzed, one study (12.5%) presented a moderate level of evidence, 4 (50%) low level of evidence and 3 (38%) have a very low level of evidence. Of these, two are from the USA and one from Brazil, which presented a descriptive design, without a greater methodological design.

Observational studies with more outlined methodologies and methods are found in the foreign literature. It was observed, in general, that no study fit the high level of scientific evidence, that is, clinical trials with a representative sample. Although well outlined, in the studies found, they had not found such consistent findings that it cannot be said that additional studies can modify confidence in the estimation of the effect. This is possibly also due to the subjective nature of the attitude content, making it more difficult to delineate it in study designs of this nature.

Analyzing the recommendation strength of the studies by the GRADE System, the selected studies present factors that increase the quality of the evidence. These factors reveal that the students’ subjective norms and attitudes, in general, influence the intention to care for alcoholic patients. In addition, studies reveal, in general, more positive attitudes of students, and these, most of the time, understand the importance of nurses in the early diagnosis of the signs and symptoms of alcoholism, abstinence and care possibilities for the area, but, at the same time, they feel unprepared and insecure in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>YEAR / PERIODICAL</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>OUTLINE</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>MAIN RESULTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E1[15]</td>
<td>Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour to examine enrolled nursing students’ intention to care for patients with alcohol dependence; A survey study</td>
<td>(2015) Nurse Education Today</td>
<td>AUS</td>
<td>The objective was to analyze the intention of students to care for patients with alcohol dependence</td>
<td>Quantitative analytical study</td>
<td>Planned Behavior Theory Questionnaire</td>
<td>Subjective norms and attitudes had a significant positive effect on the intention to care within the final model, accounting for 22.6% of the variance, F(2,83) = 12.12, p &lt;0.001. Subjective norms were the strongest predictor</td>
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<td>E2</td>
<td>Psychometric properties of the attitudes scale facing alcohol and alcoholism in nursing students</td>
<td>(2016) Latin American Journal of Nursing</td>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Identify the attitudes of nursing students using the EAFAA scale</td>
<td>Cross-sectional quantitative study</td>
<td>From January 2011 to December 2012, 420 students, divided into 2 different sample groups. EAFAA being the collection instrument. For analysis, they used AFC, AFE through Kaiser-Meyer-Olken; ROC; AMOS; TLI; CFI; RMSEA; PCFI; PNFI</td>
<td>AFE composed of 48 items divided into four factors, AFC corrected by factorial instruments. The scale was considered adequate, with a sensitivity of 70% and specificity of 75%</td>
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<td>E3</td>
<td>Theoretical and practical dimensions in nursing education: beliefs and attitudes related to alcoholism</td>
<td>(2017) Electronic Magazine - Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs</td>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Identify the attitudes of nursing students towards the treatment of alcoholic patients</td>
<td>Descriptive study</td>
<td>Developed with 117 nursing students from a public university and the scale &quot;Attitudes and beliefs about alcoholism&quot; was used</td>
<td>The students understand the importance of the nurse in the early diagnosis of the signs and symptoms of alcoholism, abstinence and care possibilities for the area, but they feel unprepared and insecure in the face of the multidisciplinary phenomenon that is alcoholism.</td>
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<td>E4</td>
<td>Attitudes of undergraduate novice nursing students before alcoholic patients</td>
<td>(2018) Electronic Magazine - Mental Health, Alcohol and Drugs</td>
<td>BR</td>
<td>Analyze the attitudes of students beginning the undergraduate nursing course towards alcoholics</td>
<td>Analytical quantitative and qualitative study</td>
<td>At first, a sociodemographic questionnaire, the Scale of Attitudes Towards Alcohol and Alcoholics was applied to nursing students (EAFAA) and an instrument to assess the pattern of alcohol use (AUDIT). Then, realistic simulations were performed to capture subjective aspects of the nursing students' attitudes</td>
<td>In general, the students' attitudes were positive. A statistically significant difference was found between those who were enrolled in the first and second year of the course (p &lt;0,05)</td>
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<td>E5</td>
<td>Changing BSN student's stigma toward patients who use alcohol and opioids through Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) education and training: a pilot study</td>
<td>(2018) Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association</td>
<td>EUA</td>
<td>To analyze education and training, the change in attitudes of undergraduate nursing students, in patients using alcohol and opioids.</td>
<td>Quantitative analytical study</td>
<td>Nursing undergraduate students participated in the research, 5 subscales were used at 3 different times</td>
<td>After a 15-week semester that included the SBIRT intervention and weekly clinical experiences with patients who had alcohol use problems, undergraduate nursing decreased as measured by three of the five subscales.</td>
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<td>E6</td>
<td>Creative learning thorough the use of simulation to teach nursing students screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment for alcohol and other drug use in a culturally competent manner</td>
<td>(2018) Journal of Transcultural Nursing</td>
<td>EUA</td>
<td>Describe, through simulation, the behavior of nursing students in screening patients using alcohol and drugs</td>
<td>Descriptive study</td>
<td>Diverse scenarios were developed and used in the laboratory with students to reduce stigma from another culture, and thus learn evidence-based practices to intervene with patients using substances</td>
<td>Students valued simulation. 91% of students said they were able to apply knowledge after the simulation</td>
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<td>E7</td>
<td>Alcohol and drug screening and brief intervention behaviors among advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) students in clinical settings</td>
<td>(2018) Applied Nursing Research</td>
<td>EUA</td>
<td>Identify the practices of nursing students in the intervention, circulation in the face of alcohol abuse</td>
<td>Descriptive study</td>
<td>Registered nursing students of advanced practice (APRN) were invited to practice brief intervention (SBIRT) in clinical settings and complete assessment records for each patient screened. The results were documented and a single item alcohol and drug screening was performed; AUDIT or DAST responses; brief intervention were also obtained</td>
<td>The results showed that APRN students used many of the SBIRT skills, showing that they learned and at the same time identified underutilized stages of the SBIRT, which can be addressed specifically in future SBIRT training.</td>
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<td>E8</td>
<td>Actitudes Frente al alcohol de los estudiantes de enfermería en dos universidades Latinoamericanas</td>
<td>(2019) Enfermagem Universitária</td>
<td>MEX COL</td>
<td>To analyze attitudes towards alcohol users, alcoholism, people with alcohol-related disorders by nursing students from Mexico and Colombia</td>
<td>Quantitative analytical study</td>
<td>Cross-sectional quantitative study. With a census sample of 231 senior nursing students from two public Latin American universities. The EAFAA instrument and a demographic and academic questionnaire were applied</td>
<td>Differences were found between universities on the perception of people with disorders related to alcohol consumption (p = 0.003). Likewise, it was determined that the training provides the student with tools to face situations of fear, insecurity, frustration, favoring better care (p = 0.045)</td>
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AUS: Australia; BR: Brazil; EAFAA: Escala de Atitudes Frente ao Álcool e ao Alcoolismo (Scale of Attitudes Towards Alcohol and Alcoholism); AFE: Análise Fatorial Confirmatória (Confirmatory Factor Analysis); AFE: Análise Fatorial Exploratória (Exploratory Factor Analysis); ROC: ROC curve technique (técnicas de curvas ROC); AMOS: Analysis of Moment Structures; TLI: Tucker-Lewis index; CFI: Comparative Fix Index; RMSEA: root mean square error of approximation; PCFI: parsimony comparative fit index; PNFI: parsimony normed fit index; AUDIT: Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test; EUA: United States of America; SBIRT: Screening Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment; APRN: advanced practice registered nurse; DAST: Dynamic Application Security Testing; MEX: Mexico; COL: Colombia.

Source: prepared by the authors, 2020.
the face of the multidisciplinary phenomenon that is alcoholism.

To favor the determination of essential elements related to the improvement of the nursing student’s attitudes towards the user of alcohol, we sought to group similar discussions through two thematic categories: Category 1: Validation of instruments and measurement of the attitudes of nursing students towards the alcoholic patient; Category 2: Attitudes of nursing students after training and qualifications, as described below.

**Category 1: Validation of instruments and measurement of nursing students’ attitudes towards alcoholic patients**

A total of 5 studies were grouped in this category. Included are studies that sought to measure students’ attitudes and/or associate them with sociodemographic variables such as age, presence of a family member of alcohol users, with whom they live and whether the pattern of alcohol consumption influences attitudes.

Most of the studies in this category were of a quantitative nature and the articles pointed out essential elements for attitude towards alcohol. The analysis of the selected papers allows us to state that, in general, most of them reveal more positive trends among nursing students towards alcoholics.

A study was found that sought to validate an instrument for measuring attitudes, which resulted in a scale composed of 48 items divided into four factors. The scale was considered adequate, sensitivity 70% and specificity 75%. 11

**Category 2: Attitudes of nursing students after training and qualifications**

The second category consists of elements of 3 publications related to the measurement of nursing students’ attitudes towards alcoholism, addressing the results of research conducted with these students before and after some type of qualification or training to work in the area. Studies show that, in general, after training, students are more optimistic about the treatment of alcoholism, also believing that the patient needs to be motivated for the treatment to be successful. However, it was observed that the majority of students continued to demonstrate more realistic views about alcoholism, even after training.

Given these findings, there is a significant improvement in the attitudes and knowledge of nursing students and after training in all studies found. However, in some cases, it is suggested that the intervention served only to reinforce old attitudes and not to change them.

**DISCUSSION**

This study sought to review nursing students’ attitudes towards alcoholic patients, using the elements identified in the scientific articles, anchoring on the evidence and strengths of recommendation. Although some studies, mainly national ones, present a low degree of evidence, their strength of recommendation was considered strong. This means that these studies have elements that can enhance the development of policies and actions related to nursing care in the face of alcohol users.

On the other hand, it is important that further research with greater rigor and methodological design on students’ attitudes is developed, in order to find out more effective ways to improve students’ knowledge in the university environment in order to know how to deal positively with alcohol users in different health contexts. The international articles, in large part, with more robust methodological designs brought to this review real elements to improve the students’ attitudes, either through the measurement of attitudes or through capacitation or training.

It was noticed that the vast majority of studies are of a quantitative nature, which suggests a predilection for researchers to know the phenomenon of attitudes through non-qualitative methods. In view of this, the fact that there are few studies aimed at studying the attitudes of students in undergraduate nursing, the need for a more in-depth knowledge of this phenomenon emerges. Thus, due to the complexity of the theme, the exclusive use of quantitative components can often not be sufficient to access subjective aspects that involve attitudes, and it is imperative that new studies of a qualitative nature are also developed in this regard.

In a quantitative and qualitative study, the attitudes of undergraduate nursing students towards the alcohol user were measured quantitatively using a scale, and then a portion of the students will participate in a realistic simulation whose actor dramatized a problematic user from a home visit. It was noticed that students of more advanced classes had more negative attitudes and this finding can be justified by the fact that the nursing student, unlike the professional already graduated, often still does not have such a proximal and routine contact with other health professionals, many times already pre-conceived by the erroneous idea that the user is a subject that “gives work”.

Studies that have appropriated educational activities to improve students’ attitudes have generally shown an improvement in this aspect. Despite this, it is clear that some training has an effect for a short period of time, which signals the need for new perspectives to be adopted in order to sensitize students to this problem. Therefore, it is clear that education and training for undergraduate nursing students can help to reduce part of their stigma in relation to working with patients with alcohol use problems and mild to moderate opioids.

It is important to study the attitudes of nursing students so that there is
CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to identify the scientific evidence about the nursing students’ attitudes towards alcoholic patients. Most of the studies found were of low evidence, with emphasis on studies that aimed to develop scales or that measure attitudes through other instruments, such as interventions or open questions. Important studies were also found that measure students’ attitudes before and after training, or brief interventions, revealing the great potential of these activities in improving student behavior towards alcohol users.

In general, the students’ attitudes were positive in most of the studies found. Despite this, it is pointed out the need to explore the theme in an expanded way already in graduation in order to avoid that the nurse, after graduating, has conducts based on stereotypes towards the user.

REFERENCES