

## The Effects of Self-Compassion Education on the Self-Efficacy of the Clinical Performance of Nursing Students

### Abstract

**Background:** The objective of the present research was to assess the influence of self-compassion training on the self-efficacy of clinical performance in nursing students, owing to the significance of proposing novel approaches to ameliorating efficiency in nursing students, underscoring the growth of positive psychologic aspects, such as self-compassion. **Materials and Methods:** The present study is a field research conducted in 2016 where 52 internship nurses were chosen via simple random sampling and were randomly divided into two groups (intervention and control); these two groups were compared in two phases: Prior to and following the intervention. Self-efficacy of clinical performance, as a standard questionnaire, was collected from the samples. Data were analyzed through the use of paired *t*-test, independent *t*-test, Chi-square, Mann-Whitney tests. **Results:** Independent *t*-test indicated that, compared with the control group, the efficaciousness of students' self-efficacy of clinical performance in the intervention group noticeably increased ( $t_{54} = 6$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). **Conclusions:** In nursing students, self-compassion training enhances their effective clinical performance.

**Keywords:** Nursing, nursing process, self-compassion, self-efficacy, students

### Introduction

Self-efficacy is defined as trusting one's personal capabilities in order to effectively act in different circumstances. With a powerful sense of self-efficacy comes the endeavor for success, yet a weak perception of one's self-efficacy entails cynicism as to our abilities.<sup>[1]</sup> Research has demonstrated that nurses with higher self-efficacy stand a better chance of succeeding in their performance. The essential objective of clinical education is to develop a sense of self-efficacy.<sup>[2]</sup> To learn efficiently and behave in an independent manner in different situations is a necessity for nursing students.<sup>[3]</sup> Studies have further reported the association between self-efficacy and self-compassion,<sup>[4]</sup> the latter defined as the ability to cope with personal suffering.<sup>[5]</sup>

It is mainly in theories of caring where the significance of self-compassion in nursing students is highlighted. Self-compassion is to be conveyed to nursing students so they can pass it on to their patients. Self-compassion is not to be performed on patients, rather it is an internal phenomenon

affecting the feedback and function of nurses (clinical performance) towards patients.<sup>[6]</sup> Failing to be compassionate towards oneself leads to the absence of real sympathy and compassion for others, particularly in a nursing environment.<sup>[7]</sup> However, taking care of patients with pains, injuries, and suffering affects nurses' health, causing self-compassionate exhortation in nurses and their patients.<sup>[8]</sup> Nurses learning self-compassion techniques are better control occupational and environmental stressors.<sup>[9]</sup> Identifying novel approaches to enhancing clinical performance, on the other hand, has led to the present study with the objective of specifying the efficaciousness of self-compassion training on the self-efficacy of clinical performance of nursing students.

### Materials and Methods

The present is the quantitative study of a field trial conducted in 2016 in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Data were collected prior to and following intervention, and in experiment and control groups. By use of convenience method, samples were

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collected from all nursing students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semesters; these samples were then randomly assigned to each group by use of simple random sampling. To each group, 25 participants were allocated using sample size calculation formula, considering a 95% confidence interval, 84% test power, and 10% sample loss. Subjects with no history of self-compassion training, oral and written consent for participation in research and no prior psychological issues were included. Excluded participants were those willing to leave the study, failing to complete the questionnaires, and absent for more than one intervention session. Classes were held through the use of certain assignments for the samples for 8 weeks (1.5-h sessions per week).

The questionnaires of demographics and self-efficacy of clinical performance of nursing students were the data collection tools, consisting of 37 items in four fields. The simultaneous validity of the tool “Self-Efficacy of Clinical Performance” with “General Self-Efficacy tool” ( $r = 0.72$ ) indicates an appropriate validity for this measure.<sup>[10]</sup> Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = 0.96$ ) indicates a proper internal consistency of the instrument. This coefficient was calculated to be between 0.90 and 0.92, where a 2-week interval test showed an appropriate instrumental stability ( $r = 0.94$ ).<sup>[10]</sup>

Via SPSS (SPSS Version 18, SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL, USA) and descriptive and analytical (independent  $t$ -test, paired  $t$ -test, Mann-Whitney, and Chi-square) methods, data were analyzed.

### Ethical considerations

This research was conducted in line with the ethical principles of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran (number: IR.MUI.REC.1394.3.557). All participants primarily signed a written informed consent form prior to commencing the study.

### Results

The mean age of students (SD) was 22.40 (0.90) years and females were larger in numbers compared with males (15 participants versus 11 participants in each group). Independent  $t$ -test indicated that no statistical difference was observed between the mean scores of overall self-efficacy of clinical performance and its domains in the experiment

and control groups prior to the intervention ( $t = 0.76$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Paired  $t$ -test [Table 1] further showed that there existed a noticeably significant difference ( $t_{54} = 5.92$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between the mean score of overall self-efficacy of clinical performance and its domains in the experiment group prior to and 1 month following the intervention.

### Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrated that self-compassion training program one month after the intervention noticeably augmented the overall score of self-efficacy in clinical performance and its domains in nursing students of the intervention group. Furthermore, self-compassion may help trainees feel more effective in the treatment sectors. In particular, self-compassion is suitable for clinical practitioners.<sup>[11]</sup> In this regard, evidence suggests that therapeutic interns might feel more effective when more self-compassionate. As far as limitations are concerned, mention can be made of receiving information for the control group from other sources, specifically from other trained classmates, which influenced the findings of the study and was beyond the control of the researchers. The short post-intervention follow-up was another limitation of this study because students were busy doing their theses.

### Conclusion

Self-compassion training has a positive influence on students’ self-efficacy in clinics and enhances the implementation of the nursing process.

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### Conflicts of interest

Nothing to declare.

**Table 1: Comparison of the mean scores of clinical performance self-efficacy and its components in intervention groups prior to and one month following the intervention**

Self-efficacy in clinical performance and its components	Prior to the intervention Mean (SD)	One month following the intervention Mean (SD)	Statistical test		
			Paired $t$ -test	df	$p$
Total score of self-efficacy clinical performance	53.23 (10.50)	72.22 (10.50)	5.92	25	>0.001
Assessment of Patients	52.84 (8.50)	71.11 (10.50)	7.14	25	>0.001
Nursing Diagnosis and Planning	50.72 (16.60)	72.14 (13.90)	4.33	25	>0.001
Program Administration	57.40 (12.20)	74.34 (11.80)	4.50	25	>0.001
Evaluation	51.91 (11.70)	72.51 (11.80)	5.46	25	>0.001

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