

NURSES AND MASTER'S STUDENTS PATIENT SAFETY COMPETENCE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY IN ESTONIA

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BACKGROUND

Patient safety is a challenging issue and in recent years has been emphasised in Estonia as well. Nurses, as the largest group of health professionals spend most time at the bedside advocating and caring for the patients. Therefore, nursing curricula need to prepare graduates to provide safe and harm-free healthcare.¹

We are missing information in Estonia about nurses and master's students patient safety competence, which needs to be assessed in order to meet their learning needs in relation to this topic.

AIM

To describe self-reported confidence in patient safety competence among nurses and master's students in nursing science.

The ultimate aim is to identify shared learning needs for patient safety education.

METHODS

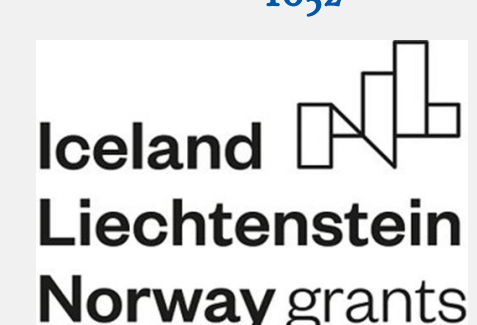
A cross-sectional web-based survey between March 2021 to February 2022.

The Health-Professional Education for Patients Safety Survey (H-PEPSS) with seven domains and 20 questions about patient safety competence was used.²

The participants were asked to respond to statement „I feel confident, what I have learned about...” on Likert scale from 1 to 5.

Targetgroup was Tartu University Hospital nurses (N=1400) and University of Tartu master's students in nursing science (N=63).

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha-coefficients to test the internal consistency of the questionnaire was used.



The study is part of the *Hybrid curriculum in patient safety: integration of academic master's education and continuous professional education in Estonia and in Norway* project, funded by the EEA/Norway Cooperation Programme in Higher Education.

RESULTS

The response rate was 11,8% (n = 165) among nurses and 60,5% (n = 49) among students.

Almost three quarter of students (73,5%) reported working as a nurse. The mean working years in the profession was 16,8 years for nurses and 10,2 years for students.

Less than a quarter of respondents (17,6% of nurses and 20,4% students) reported having previous training in patient safety.

Compared to clinical safety, socio-cultural aspects of patient safety were reported lower in both groups. Students reported higher confidence in all the domains compared to nurses.

The mean score for socio-cultural aspects for nurses was 3,54 (SD = 0,91) and for students 3,7 (SD = 0,93).

Both groups reported being most confident about understanding human and environmental factors' role in patient safety and least confident about working in teams with other health professionals. (Figure 1)

The items showing most confidence differed between groups, whereas least competence was reported in the same items among both students and nurses (Figure 2).

Cronbach's Alfa of the domains in the questionnaire ranged from 0,81 to 0,88.

Figure 1. Self-reported patient safety confidence mean scores in domains for nurses and students

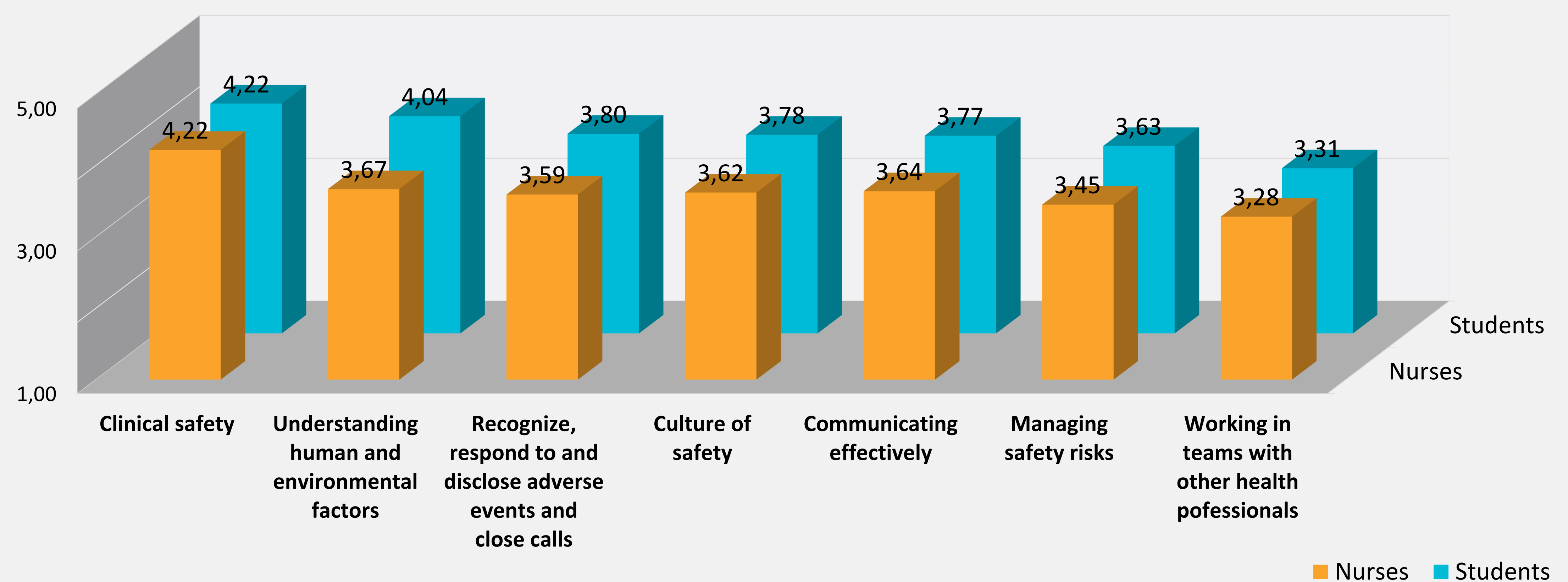


Figure 2. The lowest scores of items of patient safety competence for nurses and students



CONCLUSIONS

Both nurses and students reported having lower confidence in socio-cultural aspects of patient safety, than in clinical aspects, and both groups have similar learning needs regarding patient safety competence.

Nursing education at all levels in Estonia needs to focus more on patient safety in the curriculum.

There is a need to study, how to respond effectively to nurses' and students' shared learning needs and guide the interventions, ensuring the comprehensive development of patient safety competence for nurses and students.³

References: ¹Kirwan, M et al. (2019). Regulation and current status of patient safety content in pre-registration nurse education in 27 countries: Findings from the Rationing - Missed nursing care (RANCARE) COST Action project. *Nurse Educ. in Prac.*, 37, 132–140. ²Ginsburg et al. (2012). The H-PEPSS: an instrument to measure health professionals perceptions of patient safety competence at entry into practice. *BMJ Qual Saf.*, 21(8):676-684. ³Lee et al. (2021). Patient safety educational interventions: A systematic review with recommendations for nurse educators. *Nurs. Open*, 00: 1-13.