Clinical reasoning & cognitive bias: Enhancing nursing students clinical reasoning skills through simulation & exploration of cognitive biases

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1 Background

- The development of clinical reasoning skills is essential for registered nurses to provide safe, competent, evidenced-informed nursing care. The Nursing Process is the foundation on which nursing care is provided and embedded within this foundation is the application of critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills (Nova Scotia College of Nursing, 2019).
- Cognitive biases can negatively influence the clinical reasoning process resulting in errors in clinical judgement and decision-making.
- Graduates need to be prepared to make increasingly complex decisions about diverse client populations (Levett-Jones et al., 2010).

2 Cognitive Biases & Simulation

- Cognitive biases are flaws in judgement or faulty beliefs that influence clinical reasoning (Lawson, 2018; The Joint Commission, 2016).
- There is little evidence in the nursing literature regarding examination of cognitive biases in nursing practice.
- Simulation-based-education has been identified as teaching modality to enhance the awareness of cognitive bias (Lawson, 2018; Croskerry et al., 2013).

3 Pilot Project

- Conducted to facilitate nursing students’ exploration of cognitive biases and identify strategies to enhance their clinical reasoning using SBL
  - Target sample (n=37)
  - Incorporated as part of curriculum development
  - Debriefing with Good Judgement

4 Practice Implications

- Multiple cognitive biases were identified by BScN nursing student
- Cognitive biases influence clinical reasoning skills and clinical judgements of nursing students
- Debriefing post-simulation is critical to enhance metacognitive skills in BScN students
- Debriefing is effective in facilitating exploration of cognitive biases & the impact on BScN student’s practice

5 Future Considerations

- It is essential to enhance nursing student’s awareness of how cognitive bias may influence clinical reasoning skills.

6 References