

How Various Groups Cognition the Professions of Male Nurses: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Currently, the number of male nurses is increasing year by year under the trend of rapid development of medical era, but there are problems such as low awareness rate, high stress and high turnover rate. This paper reviews the progress of research on the degree of awareness of their careers from the perspectives of nurses, medical and social populations. So that male nurses can have a deeper understanding of their career trends and values, with a view to enhancing the recruitment and admission of male nurses in medical institutions and schools, increasing the understanding and respect of society for the male nursing profession, and promoting the better development of the male nursing profession and the provision of continuous quality nursing services.

Keywords

Male Nurses, Cognition, Attitudes, Nursing Professions, Review

The number of male nurses worldwide has increased significantly, and in recent years in developed countries in Europe and the United States, the proportion of male nurses to the total number of nurses is about 30% [1, 2], and male nurses in the United States account for 21.8% of the total number of registered nurses [3]. As of the end of 2019 statistics show that the total number of registered male nurses in China is 125,000, accounting for 2.8% of the total, and the number is still scarce [4]. China's nursing profession has experienced more than 110 years of development, but there are very few men working in nursing, and male nurses are still a "scarce resource" in major hospitals in China [5]. Most of the reasons for this are the differences and stereotypes in the cognition of nurses themselves, medical and social aspects, which make the low rate of male students choosing the nursing profession and the loss of nursing talents occur frequently [6]. the in-depth implementation of the guiding spirit of the "Guidance on Promoting the Reform and Development of the Nursing Service Industry" [7] and the "National Nursing Career Development Plan (2021-2025)" [8] by the National Health and Wellness Commission to vigorously develop nursing team and promote the construction of nursing teams, male nurses are also facing new opportunities and challenges. In order to strengthen male nurses' self-improvement and career planning, this study will examine how various groups currently perceive male nurses. It will also serve as a guide for hospitals as they develop training programs for male nurses to enhance the standard of hospital care and advance the nursing profession.

1. Male nurse self-cognition

At present, the shortage of nursing staff resources is a worldwide and long-standing serious problem. This phenomenon appears clearly in our country, one of the main causes of this problem is the low self-cognition of male

nurses, resulting in low satisfaction and thus staff turnover [9], self-cognition mainly includes the following aspects.

1.1 Male nurses have a lower cognition of nursing

Male nurses will have varying degrees of cognitive bias while in school, but their cognition of the nursing profession will shift through continuous in-depth study and understanding. A study by Zhang [10] on 94 male nursing students showed that the number of transfers was about three times more than the number of independent nursing students. And that some male nursing students had the idea of changing careers, believing that the nursing profession had no development prospects and using nursing as a springboard to other jobs in the future, which was due to the existing sense of vulnerability and neglect of male nursing students in school and the proportion of "weakness". Some male nursing students are concerned that their friends and family won't understand them, who hesitant to mention their profession. They believe that being a nurse is difficult in general and being a male nurse is even more difficult; they only attend school to fulfill their academic obligations. Their future nursing work will result in some psychological pressure, lack of professional self-confidence and no room for personal development. Students' nursing cognition before enrolling in school is one-sided and low, most of them have some understanding of the profession before enrolling in school. Compared to female students, male nursing students choose nursing mainly because of its employment situation [11].

Male nursing students' cognition of nursing will begin to change with their professional studies, and some male nursing students will gradually establish their professional identity and change their cognition and emotions during their internship phase [12]. Some studies have shown that [9] different working years and titles affect the cognition of male nurses, the shorter the nursing experience the more likely male nurses are to leave. The cognition of male nurses who have been working for 1-3 years, 3-5 years and more than 5 years will change to different degrees, the higher the title the lower the rate of male nurses leaving. But they still worry about other issues such as organizational commitment fulfillment issues, family life issues and social cognitive environment.

1.2 Male nurses have lower awareness of clinical primary care

Male nurses have different degrees of deficiencies in clinical basic nursing cognition. Male nurses believe that the procedural steps of nursing operations are complicated and the quality evaluation requirements are high, which results in nursing cognitive deficiencies [13]. They are unwilling to learn basic skill operations, such as showing a low sense of interest in basic operations such as taking temperature and blood pressure and organizing bed units. However, they will actively participate in technical operations, such as inserting gastric and urinary catheters and PICC implantation. Male nurses in the clinical have a certain rejection of their role, often shy to introduce their status as nurses to patients and others, unwilling to take the initiative to introduce nursing routine knowledge and disease health education to patients. The relatively small number of interactions with supervising teachers, asking for advice on problems, and reluctance to be blamed by others for problems in their own operations [14].

Xiao LH study illustrated that [15] male nurses in basic nursing have a serious lack of awareness of the roles. They have an insufficient understanding of the basic nursing principles and implications, which leads to a connection between this phenomena and their professional identities and areas of interest. Male nursing students believe that work and personal interest are closely related. So the supervising teachers should actively guide and help male nursing students to recognize the importance of the profession, cultivate nursing as a personal interest and generate a sense of pleasure will make the work twice as effective^[16], so as to enhance the degree of role recognition of male nursing students.

This revealed that it is crucial to focus on developing the nursing team toward specialization by focusing on the nurses' interests during their school training and clinical practice.

1.3 Male nurses have lower awareness of the nursing profession

Male nurses who are now working need urgently to be respected, nurtured, and improved upon due to the low career cognition of male nurses and the fact that male nurses frequently experience the role pressure brought on by gender after engaging in nursing work [17]. Male nurses face the dual pressure from the society and self-concept conflict [11], and are confused, lost or even retreating from their career, thus limiting their career development. Because they lack positive career cognition and a sense of pride and accomplishment, male nurses find it challenging to satisfy their need for respect and self-actualization in the nursing profession [18]. This causes burnout in the professional learning process, confusion in employment, and makes their training more difficult.

A research study illustrated [19] that a higher level of nurses' career cognition would lead to better job performance and lower turnover rates, and male nurses had somewhat higher career cognition than female nurses. While the results of Worthington [20] longitudinal follow-up study of 3,000 nursing students showed high career cognition among female nurses, which may be based on differences in national conditions, cultural contexts and the operation of hospital mechanisms. Foreign scholars have found that the level of nurses' cognition of their own role affects the quality of care to some extent [21].

Traditional cognition and gender stereotypes have a great influence on nursing cognition, so they should be improved to stabilize the nursing workforce and promote nursing career development, otherwise the quality of nursing services and the development of the nursing discipline will be seriously affected.

2. Cognition of the medical institution population

With the reform and development of modern nursing and the improvement of people's view of health, the quality of nursing work has also put forward higher requirements. Male nurses are a group of emerging nursing force and the number of clinical front line has increased, but their engagement in nursing work is often not understood and respected, which makes it difficult for male nurses to start their clinical work and their work motivation will be hit in different degrees [22]. Male nurses should be paid attention to and valued by hospitals.

2.1 Hospital managers have a higher awareness of male nurses

With the development of contemporary medical technology, the attitude of most nurse leaders indicates the need for male nurses to join the nursing team [23], feeling that a single female dominated nursing is no longer sufficient to meet the current nursing needs and the demand for male nurses is increasing. According to a study, male nurses need emotional support due to nurse leaders' high commitment to them and their high level of cognition of them. Nurse leaders, who act as direct managers and leaders of nursing staff, also show that they care about, respect, and trust male nurses, which can help them become more engaged in their jobs and boost their professional confidence [24].

However, in an era of shortage of medical resources, "medical over nursing" is still the dominant ideology of management. The lack of personalized training and management by managers makes male students less motivated to choose nursing and less able to consider career cognition in depth. Nurses desire support, care, and recognition from their leaders, so the level of leadership concern for male nurses plays an important role and directly affects the career development of the nursing workforce. Raari's study found [25] that most of the reasons male nurses are dissatisfied with the nursing profession are due to a lack of consideration by managers of the current state of the nursing profession, the public image of nurses, and human resources.

The higher awareness of male nurses among administrators indicates recognition of the nursing profession, but the degree of importance received needs to be improved, and nurses' professional confidence and interest in their work need to be led by their managers.

2.2 Higher acceptance of male nurses in different departments

The results of the study by Luo Y [26] showed that most general hospitals agree with the necessity of training male nurses and also affirm that men have certain advantages in the nursing profession. The departments most in need of male nurses are the operating room, ICU, emergency department, and psychiatry [27], and the evaluation of male nurses' work is generally accepted, and some hospitals have accumulated some experience in training male nurses. However, the acceptance of pediatrics and oncology is low, and gynecology is basically zero. This is because in these departments such as operating rooms and hemodialysis rooms, which have characteristics of high work intensity, strong specialization, and rapid changes in critical conditions. Male nurses have the advantages of good physical fitness, strong tolerance, strong reaction and response ability, strong logical and rational thinking, and strong decision-making ability, which are better suited to these departments [28].

80% of the respondents believe that the training and attention to male nurses in most hospitals still remain in the physical advantage, and there is a lack of training and management system suitable for the career development of male nurses [29]. In a predominantly female working and learning environment, most policy planning gives priority to the interests of the female group, so male nurses expect policies to be adjusted to be more considerate of male nurses [30].

For the advantages of male nurses and the needs of the department, male nurses are assigned more in the operating room and ICU, etc. More awareness in the broader medical community is required to eradicate this situation

and build a beautiful medical environment because male nurses and doctors are less acceptable in fields like gynecology and pediatrics, among others.

2.3 Higher acceptance of male nurses in community healthcare

The special nature of community work places higher demands on the overall quality of nursing staff. Community nursing is a service work dedicated to human health, which requires a combination of physical, mental and will power. Compared to hospitals, community nurses have several jobs, which makes their workload and work more difficult. They need to have a solid theoretical foundation, skilled technology, good physical fitness and the ability to handle problems independently. Male nurses have their own advantages to join the community nursing profession, which can improve the overall level of community nursing competence. Community nursing work includes home visits, which requires community nurses to visit the community alone to serve the people in the community, and compared to female nurses, male nurses have a high personal safety factor. In addition, heavy physical work such as carrying patients, male nurses are more competent [31].

However, research studies show that [32] only 0.8% of male nurses would choose to go to the community, due to the slow start of community nursing, the lack of many community health equipment, and the promotion of personnel. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the study and education of community nursing for school students and increase the practice of community nursing, so that more nurses will be willing to join this career.

2.4 Medium cognition of male nurses in medical schools

Nursing career education is still at the experimental stage. The curriculum of medical schools is primarily geared toward training female nurses, which to some extent ignores the actual needs of male nurses. It also lacks study courses that are appropriate for male nurses' professional advantages and quality traits, proper adaptive counseling, and adequate training for male nurses' professional thoughts, career ideals, and sense of responsibility. Male nurses are unfamiliar and confused about their own career planning, lacking ways and steps to develop their own career planning, and most of them have not received education on career planning [33]. They are eager to get knowledge on career planning. Some foreign studies have pointed out the need to develop a structured and flexible curriculum in the training of nursing staff [34], so it is important to focus on training and solidifying the group of male nurses to facilitate their efficient transition.

An institution in Shandong [35] produced a change in the education of male nurses and built a comprehensive education system by altering the traditional educational concept through civilianization concept, opening male nurse classes and semi-military management, developing a teaching program appropriate for male nurses, and establishing a male nurse association to develop the professionalism of male nurses and guide them to accurately understand the background of nursing professions. The intervention of career planning and management of male nurses by narrative group counseling has achieved good results, and the sample size can be expanded and replicated [36].

The nursing profession is growing rapidly in medical schools, and specialized didactic training in male nurses has been carried out one after another, but career planning and orientation counseling for them are still lacking.

3. The cognition of the social crowd

Since the creation of modern nursing by Nightingale, the nursing profession has been dominated by women though. With the progress of society and the development of health care, the view that nursing is not a single-sex job has emerged in the nursing profession abroad since the 1950s. However, the awareness of male nurses among the social population is generally low, and nursing staff are subject to varying degrees of external social pressure when engaging in nursing work, which makes male nurses psychologically overstressed.

3.1 Low awareness of male nurses among social residents and inpatient population

With the development of the times, male nurses are not new to work in hospitals, but the awareness rate of male nurses among hospitalized patients is not very high, and some have never even heard of this profession. A research study proved that 60.27% of the social population knew or had received nursing care from male nurses, and 43.43% were willing to receive nursing care from male nurses [37]. Wang Y [38] showed that the social population's cognition of nurses' education and nursing degrees was not perfect, and the general cognition of nurses' social status was in the middle. Most male nurses engaged in nursing are influenced by various prejudices in social cognition, fear of non-acceptance by patients' families, different views of female nurses, and clinical nursing work is trivial, intensive, lower treatment, and social cognition do not pay enough attention. The salary of nurses is usually lower

than that of doctors, and male nurses, as the main economic force of family income, can also lead to high stress among male nurses [39]. Long-term high stress work makes personnel burnout higher. Taiwanese scholars investigated 144 ICU nurses in 7 hospitals and found that work stress, burnout and depression levels are positively correlated, and burnout is closely related to nurses' mental health [40].

A study by Li XY [41] found that only 46.7% of patients thought that male nursing interns in the nursing profession had better prospects for development. Patients' acceptance of male nurses is less than ideal and there is a perceived bias towards the nurse-patient relationship [42]. In a Jamaican hospital patients' cognition of male nurses, 51% of respondents had negative attitudes towards male nurses, and male nurses had even lower attitudes towards patient enemata [43]. In a qualitative study in Korea [44], male nurses were subjected to gender discrimination in the workplace in multiple ways, and were particularly vulnerable to discrimination by patients and families, with female patients and children rejecting more prominently, and male nurses barely worked in gynecology and pediatrics [45]. Residing under the social cognition that men in the role of caregivers are not easily accepted and recognized by patients [46].

However, some inpatients and the community believe that male nurses are better than women in terms of their ability to be physically active, calm and rational, and can give patients or families a sense of security and trust [47]. Male patients are more willing to accept male nurses for examinations involving private areas, so from the perspective of patient needs, personalized care and protection of male patients' privacy, the whole society needs male nurses [48].

The professional image of male nurses has not been fully recognized by the society, which makes male nurses maladjusted to their role and confused doubts about their future career cognitive orientation thus choosing to escape. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the social crowd's cognition of male nurses, which also helps to relieve the psychological pressure of male nurses and create a good external environment for the development of male nursing team.

3.2 Different cognition of male nurses in different regions

Hu WJ [49] conducted a survey on the perceived attitudes and acceptance of male nurses in different regions, the southeast and south-central regions were significantly higher than the northwest and northeast regions. The impact of conventional beliefs is to blame for the first-ranked scarcity of male nurses in each region; in the northern region, the family and the hospital are the main sources of this shortage. A survey in the south, the cognition rate of male nurses is higher, because the southern population has more communication with foreign countries, the overall thinking is more open, and the salary and bonus income in the southern hospitals are high, the men willing to engage in nursing work than the north some. But the professional cognition of male nurses is at a medium level, in the nursing profession is a problem that can not be delayed, which can lead to depression and anxiety, high turnover rate and many other adverse effects [50].

In order to increase the acceptance and deep understanding of male nurses in society, it is necessary to vigorously promote male nurses in society in accordance, positively promote the image of male nurses through various channels, and consistently emphasize the importance of nursing work in the overall hospital work.

4. Summary

In summary, as society has developed and the medical and health care system has undergone reform, people's cognition of the nursing profession have improved in some ways. However, male nurses are still perceived differently by different groups, and this has a variety of negative effects on their ability to practice nursing. In order to fully utilize the professional value and advantages of male nurses, consolidate and strengthen the construction of male nurses, make nursing staff resources more optimal, and make nursing work more, we should concentrate on the stereotypical impressions of male nurses among social groups and patients. We should also provide proper guidance and open more learning channels for male nurses from schools, hospitals, and society.

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