

Student nurses: Their attitudes and experiences linked to the use of illicit substances.

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Objectives

- To gain an insight into the attitudes and values of student nurses linked to substance use.
- To consider if differences in levels of training around substance misuse or differences in specialties influence a nurse's perception of illicit drugs.
- To assess the knowledge base used by student nurses to inform health education interventions with their patients/clients.

Background

- The use of illicit substances appears to be increasing in the UK.
- Nurses and student nurses may be engaged in illicit substance use at a similar rate to the general population.
- Negative attitudes towards individuals who use illicit substances have been reported amongst qualified nurses.
- Negative attitudes may lead to drug misuse being inadequately managed within healthcare settings.
- There is a growing emphasis on health promotional approaches within health care provision.

Sample

Student nurses undertaking the Diploma in Nursing (Adult, Mental Health, Child and Learning Disability branches) at two universities in the East Midlands will be included in the study.

Data Collection

Multiple approaches to data collection are being used in order to verify and double check findings.

Data will be generated via the use of group interviews, one to one interviews and via diaries completed by informants.

Data analysis

Grounded theory (GT) techniques have been employed which involves coding the data on three levels;

- **Open coding** enables the researcher to examine the data, exposing categories of information.
- **Axial coding** 'identifies a single category as the central phenomenon' allowing the researcher to contextualise this in terms of its relationship with other categories (Bryman 2001).
- The final stage, **selective coding**, identifies a 'story' which integrates the categories in the axial coding (Creswell 1998) thus developing a hypothesis.

Preliminary findings

Initial investigation indicates that there are several factors which can influence a student nurses attitudes toward illicit drugs, including;

- Personal life experience.
- Levels of knowledge and education linked to illicit substances.
- The practice environment and attitudes of more senior health care workers.