

Cultural empathy: A comparison of levels of empathy between 1st year nursing students and 3rd year nursing students.

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Empathy within nurses appears to be on the decline, this is a startling admission when we know that poor patient outcomes occur when it is perceived that a nurse lacks empathy (Tracey Levett-Jones, 2018). Further to this, there is a correlation between the perceived empathy of a nurse and patient satisfaction. An Australian study cites a lack of empathy as one of the main themes of disciplinary complaints against nurses (Doyle, Hungerford & Cruickshank, 2014). This begs the question, can we improve how empathy is taught and will this improve the empathy levels of nursing students? One of New Zealand's founding documents is the Treaty of Waitangi, which established New Zealand as a bicultural country in 1840, however with increasing immigration, and refugee resettlement New Zealand is becoming a multi-cultural society (Bathurst & Edwards, 2011). Davi, Koss, Schmaltz and Loeb (2007) state that 50% of healthcare consumers who are culturally and linguistically diverse experience adverse health events. This statistic requires that action is taken to improve the health outcomes for these people. Students will use immersive virtual reality to experience the life of someone within a completely foreign healthcare setting. A modified version of the Kiersma-Chen Empathy Scale has been used to compare the empathy levels of a convenience sample of first and third year nursing students within a regional School of Nursing prior to and post these teachings. Preliminary results have shown that the majority of students' empathy levels improved following these lessons. These results are yet to be compared amongst year groups, as this is scheduled for the beginning of 2019.