

Empathic decline and training in nursing students

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this article is to examine whether the levels of empathy fit the concept of empathic decline. **METHOD:** This was a non-experimental and cross-sectional study. Two populations of nursing students in two nursing programs were studied: Universidad San Sebastián (Santiago, Chile) and Universidad Mayor (Temuco, Chile). The original data on empathy, assessed by the Jefferson Scale of Empathy, were combined into a single data base. They were then analyzed by means of normality tests and homoscedasticity, Cronbach's alpha, analysis of variance; the standard deviation of the dependent outcome measure ($S_{y.x}$) and the coefficient of determination (R^2) were estimated. **RESULTS:** The sample sizes from the two programs were 479 and 277, respectively. It was found that the distributions of the averages over the course of study for empathy (and its components) were constant, and in some cases increased. **CONCLUSION:** It was found that the distribution of the means of empathy in the nursing students analyzed did not conform to the classical empathic decline observed in other studies. Therefore, it is inferred that the traditional factors identified as causes of empathic erosion were not operating in the same way in the studied context.

Indexed keywords

EMTREE medical terms:

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