ABSTRACT
Effectiveness of Communication Skills Training Program among the Undergraduate Student Nurses in Mysore

BACKGROUND
Nursing personnel’s are the largest workforce involved in direct care of the patient in the field of health care. This demands absolute preparation of the student nurses to facet the health care sector. Unfortunately, the expectations about their care are not achieved due to inadequate practical training in imparting the communication skills to the nurses during their training period.

OBJECTIVE
This study aimed at developing and evaluating the effectiveness of communication skills training program among the undergraduate student nurses. In addition, an attempt was made to compare the first and the fourth year undergraduate student nurses for their communication skills and its association with the different socio-demographic variables.

METHODS
The communication skills training program was developed in consultation with experts and modified after the pilot study. The program consisted of 5 modules namely, introduction to basics of communication, building rapport and questioning techniques, listening skills, empathy skills, and ethical considerations of communication that could be delivered by a nursing expert in 10 hours (two hours each day). To verify the effectiveness of the program, a quasi experimental design was adopted and 120 undergraduate student nurses from Mysuru were recruited. They were equally divided into Experimental group and Control group and among them, 30 participants were from I year and 30 participants were from the IV year. Apart from Socio-Demographic data, pre-test measures of Knowledge questionnaire, Communication Skills Attitude Scale, and Self-perceived Communication Scale were used. In order to assess the observed communication skills, video recording with the simulated patient was done. After the pre test, the communication skills training program that was developed by the researcher was conducted for the Experimental group. To both the groups all the tools were re-administered and a post-video recording was done. The video-recordings were shuffled and were rated by 4 raters, who have achieved high inter-rater reliability (Kappa – 0.78) independently using Kalamazoo Essential elements for effective communication skills.
RESULTS
The results showed that there was a significant difference in the knowledge, attitude, self-perceived and observed communication skills in the Experimental group. On comparing the first year and fourth year, first year students had a better knowledge than the fourth year students. On the other hand, fourth year students had a better self-perceived and observed nurse-patient communication skills. However, there was no difference in the attitude between them. On analyzing the correlation, a positive relationship was seen between the knowledge, attitude and self-perceived nurse-patient communication; whereas a negative correlation was observed between the self-perceived and observed nurse-patient communication skills. Association with demographic data showed, Christian students to have positive attitude. The students from the joint family and those who have family member suffering with chronic illness had higher self-perceived communication skills.

CONCLUSION
It was evident that the communication skills training program developed in this study was very effective. In order to impart nurse-patient communication skills, the 10-hour module may be incorporated into the regular curriculum for achieving their overall competency of the nursing students in nursing.

Keywords: Nurse-patient communication, Communication skills training program, Knowledge, Attitude, Self-perceived communication skill, Observed Communication skills.