Title: Predictors of spiritual maturity in selected Bachelor of Science in nursing programs in the Philippines: a cross-sectional survey of students and teachers

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Abstract:

The purpose guiding this study was to determine predictors of spiritual maturity in nursing students and teachers in selected Bachelor of Science programs in Manila, Philippines. This study may contribute to a better understanding of spirituality in the health care context.

Spirituality was defined as a vital force that promotes giving of wholistic care by nurses and was based on the Neuman System Model and the Loma Linda Circle of Wholeness Model. Both models emphasize the importance of spirituality in nursing.

This cross-sectional survey used four instruments: the Religious Maturity Scale (Dudley & Cruise, 1990), the Faith maturity Scale (Thayer, 1993), the Religious Well-being Scale (Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982), and the Spiritual Support Scale (Genia, 1995). The sample consisted of 474 nursing students and 68 nursing teachers from six colleges.

The best predictors of student spiritual maturity were years of religious commitment, intent to serve God effectively, and religious background. The best predictor of nursing teachers’ spiritual maturity was religious background. Freshmen students had significantly higher spiritual maturity than senior nursing students, most spiritual maturity than senior nursing
students, most evident for students with over 10 years of religious commitment or those from a non-Christian background.

The most important reasons, subjects chose nursing, were to help the sick and to serve God effectively. A personal relationship with God enhanced the feeling of spiritual maturity. Quality care and the spiritual maturity of nursing students were perceived as closely related. Students saw spiritual fellowship activities as the best way to improve the spiritual quality of the curriculum, while teachers saw integration of faith and learning as most important.

The study results indicate that the Religious Maturity Scale measured a different dimension of spiritual maturity than did the other three scales.

Study recommendations include fostering spiritual experiences for nursing students throughout their program, holding in-service activities for teachers on how to integrate faith and learning, discussing spiritual issues with students, and incorporating spiritual theme and values into classes. Nursing students should be led to realize the critical relationship between their spiritual maturity and their provision of quality care. The wholistic care model should be further tested as a contribution toward nursing theory.