



Effectiveness of empathy education for undergraduate nursing students

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- ▶ This is a summary of Levett-Jones T, Cant R, and Lapkin S.¹
- ▶ Empathy is the ability to understand and share other people's feelings, often described as being able to *put yourself in someone else's shoes*.
- ▶ Empathetic healthcare interventions are thought to improve patient outcomes.
- ▶ There is a need for preregistration nursing programmes to teach students how to be empathetic.
- ▶ The purpose of this systematic review was to critically appraise and synthesise the current evidence regarding empathy interventions in undergraduate nurse education.



METHODS

Inclusion criteria	Search strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Studies looking at interventions to increase empathy in undergraduate nursing students. ▶ Experimental or quasiexperimental studies (quantitative data). ▶ English language articles published between 2008 and 2018. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Free text search of Google Scholar—to explore breadth of publications ▶ Pubmed—to identify MESH heading ▶ Searches in CINAHL plus, SCOPUS, Pubmed and ERIC

RESULTS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- ▶ Twenty-three studies from eight countries; two studies collected longitudinal data while four studies randomised students into intervention and control groups.
- ▶ Nine of the interventions resulted in an increase in empathy among participants.
- ▶ The most effective interventions were immersive and experiential simulations focusing on vulnerable patient groups (eg, wearing a hemiparesis suit) that provided opportunities for guided reflection.
- ▶ Larger studies using validated tools are needed that evaluate the impact of educational intervention on students' behaviours in practice over the longer term.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- ▶ Nurse educators should employ methods such as immersive simulation to help their students enhance their ability to empathise with patients and carers.

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Reference

- 1 Levett-Jones T, Cant R, Lapkin S. A systematic review of the effectiveness of empathy education for undergraduate nursing students. *Nurse Educ Today* 2019;75:80–94.