

**Assessing Nursing Student's Awareness  
towards Clinical Learning  
Environmental Safety**

**Thesis**

*Submitted for Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of  
Master Degree in Nursing Administration*

**By**

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2016**

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**2016**

# Acknowledgment

First thanks to **ALLAH** to whom I relate any success in achieving any work in my life.

I wish to express my deepest thanks, gratitude and appreciation to *Dr. Samia Adam*, Assist. Prof of Nursing administration for her meticulous supervision, kind guidance, valuable instructions and generous help.

Special thanks are due to *Dr. Hemat Abd El azeem*, Lecturer of Nursing Administration for her sincere efforts, fruitful encouragement.

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## ABSTRACT

Nursing students are prone to occupational hazards. Given the nature of nursing working environment, responsibilities and duties, nurses are on the frontline of numerous occupational hazards such as biological/infectious disease, chemical risks, environmental/ mechanical risks, physical risks, and psychosocial risks. **The aim** of this study was to assess nursing students' awareness towards safety of clinical learning environment. **Setting:** The study was conducted in technical institute at Banha university hospital which affiliated to ministry of health. **Sample:** Were 300 students. **Tools:** The data were collected using a questionnaire sheet designed by the researcher, after review of pertinent literature, namely questionnaire to measure the student knowledge about environmental safety in the clinical training. **Results:** showed that exposure to psychological hazards was the highest, while the lowest was the fire hazards. Furthermore, most of the participants were fully aware of using personal protective equipment. There were statistically significant differences between levels of awareness of nurse students regarding exposures to clinical hazards, physical environment and personnel protective, and their educational grade, also and student age. **Conclusion:** most of the nursing students were exposed to at least one of the five occupational hazards. **Recommendation:** The workplace settings should exert more efforts in the provision of efficient safety measures training, for nursing students in their clinical area as well as close supervision.

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### Keywords

Nursing students, Safety, Clinical learning

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## INTRODUCTION

Clinical learning environment is a complex social entity. This environment is effective on the learning process of nursing students in the clinical area. However, learning in clinical environment has several benefits, but it can be challenging, unpredictable, stressful, and constantly changing (*Baraz et al., 2015*). The last two decades have seen widespread changes to nurse education but the clinical field remains an essential and invaluable resource in preparing students for the reality of their professional role, supporting the integration of theory and practice, and linking the 'knowing what' to do with the 'knowing how' to deliver care (*Chan, 2007*).

Moreover, Clinical learning experience is located at the center of nursing education. In various aspects, it is effective on the development of professional nursing. Therefore, it is used widely in teaching and learning of undergraduate nursing students (*Cheraghi et al., 2008*). The clinical learning objectives are included for empowerment of nursing students to develop clinical competencies and socialization in the nursing profession. These events occur within a complex and dynamic learning environment, called as the clinical environment (*Killam and Heerschap, 2013*).

The clinical learning environment represents a vital element of nurse education. Environment, then, is a mix of the deliberate and the accidental, the conjunction of planned and unanticipated events. CLE is defined as complex network of forces that are effective on clinical learning outcomes

*(Rahmani et al., 2011)*. In spite of classroom education, clinical education occurs in complex environment *(Chan, 2007)*.

A learning environment consists of a wide set of features that affect learning. The idea of a learning environment implies a setting where intentions and design cannot account for everything that happens; some elements escape control or are at least unintended *(Tom and Gregory, 2009)*

The concept of safety always includes a notion of hazard whether one is taking about safety as a state / situation, a feeling or a practice; we are always taking about being safe against or from something. Thus, when taking and writing about safety there will always be a need to specify the types of incidents involved. Safe is typically defined as freedom from danger or the risk of harm; secure from danger or loss. Safety is typically defined as the condition of being protected against physical harm or loss *(Clifton, 2011)*.

Hospital environment should be designed to ensure a safe and supportive environment to prevent accidents, reducing injuries and errors and protecting the patient and the personnel who care them. Additionally, Workplace safety refers to the working environment at a company and encompasses all factors that impact the safety, health, and well-being of employees. This can include environmental hazards, unsafe working conditions or processes, drug and alcohol abuse, and workplace violence *(Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 2010)*.

Workplace safety is monitored at the national level by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA has three stated goals that serve as the cornerstones of its policies and regulations include, improve the safety and health for all workers, as evidenced by fewer hazards, reduced exposures, and fewer injuries, illnesses, and fatalities, Change workplace culture to increase employer and worker awareness of, commitment to, and involvement in safety and health, and secure public confidence through excellence in the development and delivery of OSHA's programs and services (*OSHA, 2010*).

Maintaining a safe environment reflects a level of compassion and vigilance for patient welfare that is as important as any other aspect of competent health care. The way to improve safety is to learn about causes of error and use this knowledge to design systems of care to "... make errors less common and less harmful when they do occur (*Stone et al., 2008*).

As noted in recent reports by the International Council of Nursing and the Institute of Medicine, one of the reasons for the current and future shortages of nurses relates to the work environment.<sup>3, 4</sup> Improving the environment in which nurses work may attract new students to nursing as well as engage current professionals in developing innovative models of care delivery that will help retain and nurture future generations of nurses. Most important, improving the work environment may also improve the quality and safety of patient care (*International Council of Nurses and the Florence Nightingale International Foundation, 2006*).

## **Significance of the study**

Work- related hazard are very common in developing countries where workplace hazards are more severe. Each year, there are as many as 250 million occupational injuries resulting in 330000 fatalities. Annually, an estimated 160 million new cases of work –related disease occur worldwide hazards in workplace affect not only the workers but also the agency itself by its’ effect on wage loss, medical payment workplace disruption, effect on productivity, high absenteeism rate, low employee morale and loss of job (*NIOSH, 2012*).

The annual international issued, show that 110 million workers are exposed to various injuries, including 180 thousand afflicted lead to death and injuries work at a rate of 4 seconds and a serious accident every 3 minutes (*Higher Education in the Kingdom of Bahrain, 2014*). Still occupational diseases and accident are the most important causes of injuries and death among workers each year as the number of deaths of about two million people each year among all workers in the world (*Occupational Safety and Health Situation in the Arab Region, 2013*).

It is estimated that each case of death has get 500 to 2000 work- related injuries. Rate of deaths and injuries is high in areas like the Middle East about 19,000 and more than 14 million deaths, injuries and work-related accident, respectively in each year (*Occupational Safety and Health Situation in the Arab Region, 2013*).

Nurse students while receiving their clinical training in clinical learning environments should be protected from any unsafe work conditions. Their awareness about the safety of this environment would help in their protection. Additionally, it will help to deeply root safety practices during their future work as practicing nurses. As importantly, clinical teachers must be aware of these safety principles to be able to apply them and transfer their experience to students.

## **AIM OF THE STUDY**

**T**his study aims at assessing nursing student's awareness towards safety of clinical learning environment.

### **Research question:**

What are the levels of nursing student awareness regarding the safety at the clinical learning environment?

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Conceptual Definitions of Terms

**E***nvironment*, this word has a great importance in our life. The simple definition of environment is the 'surrounding'. It is what surrounds a thing. We can also define it as "environment is the combination of all physical and organic factors that act on a living being, residents, or ecological society and power its endurance and growth. "It could be a physical component, which is known as physical environment or a-biotic environment that includes the built environment. The natural surroundings like air conditions, water, land, atmosphere etc, are also the part of physical environment but they are commonly known as natural environment (*Reiling, 2006*).

*Environment* denotes the totality of the surroundings and conditions in which something or someone lives or functions. A discussion about learning environments starts with a physical space, a virtual equivalent, or at least a set of organizational principles that had their origins in a conventionally space-influenced model (*Tom and Gregory, 2009*).

*Clinical setting* applies to any context where patients or clients groups are provided with services relating to health. However, it is recognized that some professions (particularly social work) place their learners in non-clinical settings, as well as in clinical settings. To non-clinical workplace experiential