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Mentors' attitudes, beliefs and implementation of evidence based practice when mentoring student nurses in the community: A qualitative study.

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Background:

Nursing practice based on evidence improves patient care. Mentors supporting student nurses are in clinical placements are in a unique position to demonstrate evidence based practice (EBP). The NMC (2008) suggest mentors must be able to identify and apply research and EBP, increase or review the evidence-base used to support practice and support student nurses in applying an evidence base to their own practice. However, there is limited literature on nurse mentor's attitudes, beliefs and implementation of EBP when mentoring student nurses in the community.

Methods

Data were collected via 7 focus groups in 2015 with 33 community nurse mentors from one NHS Foundation Trust. Community settings of the mentors included: community hospital inpatients and outpatients, minor injury units, and district nurse teams including specialist teams such as long term conditions, tissue viability, respiratory and cardiac rehabilitation. The interview schedule was based on information from a pilot group and previous literature. Data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Results

Emergent super-ordinate themes from community nurse mentors included: 1) implementation of EBP 2) community nursing versus acute hospital nursing 3) implications of degree entry nursing 4) bidirectional learning 5) being part of the students' journey a role model 6) EBP versus practice based evidence 7) barriers: IT, time, student attitudes, agency staff, mentorship course, paperwork 8) facilitators: IT, time, student attitudes, resources.

Discussion

All nurse mentors believed their clinical practice to be informed from evidence, specifically the structure provided from guidelines and policies both nationally and locally. Reviewing guidelines occurred in job descriptions of more senior roles. Mentors invested time and energy in supporting students to implement EBP as recognised the importance of educating the next generation of nurses. Issues regarding the mentorship course arose including; accessibility, length of the course and content.