

The Importance of Asking For Pronouns: Assessing Cultural Competency Among BSN Nursing Students

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WHAT ARE PRONOUNS?

Pronouns are a set of words that can stand in a sentence in place of a person's name for ease of flow. Typically, pronouns are tied to gender, so the conscious use of pronouns is important to respecting gender identity. **Gender-neutral pronouns** are pronouns that do not imply gender, male or female. They/them and **neopronouns** are gender-neutral.

BACKGROUND

This is a quality improvement project for proper use of gender pronouns, endorsed by the American Nurses Association. The consistent use of personal pronouns in the clinical setting is uncommon. The Joint Commission has mandated the use of preferred pronouns in the clinical setting to prevent health care misgendering in the LGBTQ+ population. The inconsistent use of personal pronouns is commonly due to a lack of education or cultural awareness. Identification of LGBTQ+ health disparities and education on appropriate gender preference pronouns is essential as a registered nurse. There is currently no consistent education on the use of pronouns in the nursing curriculum.

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METHODS

Surveying Criteria:

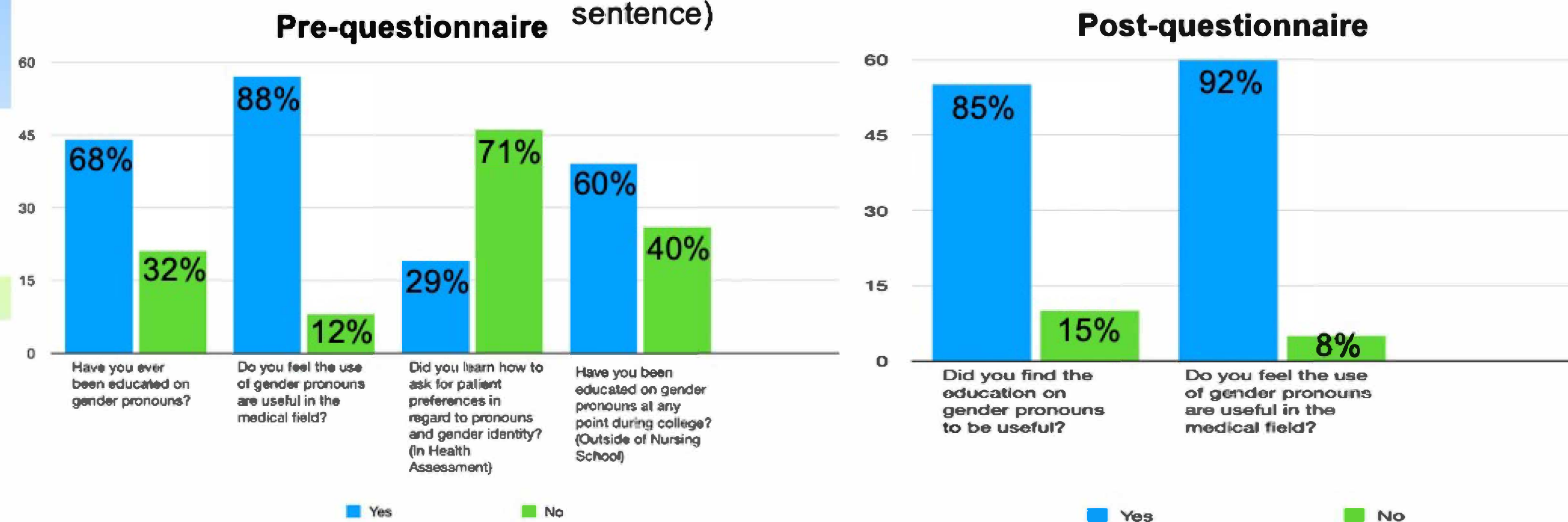
- Current University of North Florida School of Nursing students in Women's Health/Obstetrics.
- Have successfully completed Health Assessment.
- 68 sample responses were anonymous
- Created a pre and post qualitative/quantitative survey using convenience sampling through the Qualtrics software.
- In the survey, students expressed their feelings on use of gender pronouns.
- Provided pronoun education for nursing students in the classroom.

Pre-Questionnaire Questions:

- 1) Have you ever been educated on gender pronouns?
- 2) Do you feel the use of gender pronouns are useful in the medical field?
- 3) Did you learn how to ask for patient preferences regarding pronouns and gender identity? (In Health Assessment)
- 4) Have you been educated on gender pronouns at any point during college?
- 5) How do you feel about the use of gender pronouns? (2-3 sentence)

Post-Questionnaire Questions:

- 1) Did you find the education on gender pronouns to be useful?
- 2) Do you feel the use of gender pronouns are useful in the medical field?
- 3) How do you feel about the use of gender pronouns? (2-3 sentence)



RESULTS

Before pronoun education, the students thought that using pronouns were important but did not feel confident in using them in the clinical setting. When asked about how they felt regarding the use of gender pronouns, students expressed that the use of pronouns should be implemented because it creates a comfortable environment for the patient, which is part of quality nursing care. The concern was that there is no proper education on this subject matter. Based on the pre-questionnaire, students did not learn about addressing pronouns in health assessment.

After pronoun education, students expressed that they felt more comfortable using and asking for patient pronouns. They all understood the importance of pronoun use as it is advocated by the American Nurses Association, The Joint Commission, Affordable Care Act, and the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights.

DISCUSSION

Misgendering is prevalent in health care, and it is discouraged to make assumptions based on name and appearance as it can be seen as offensive. As future health care professionals, it is imperative that nursing students are educated early on about assessing for patient preferences regarding pronouns.

Health Assessment is a nursing course that focuses on development of assessment and communication skills in obtaining health history and physical examination. There is lack of awareness regarding pronouns in the nursing curriculum, specifically in the demographic section of the health history. Based on the Qualtrics survey, students reported that they have not been taught how to ask for patient pronouns in health assessment.

CONCLUSION

It is essential to ask about patient preferences regarding pronouns, because it creates a safe space for gender minorities and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Correctly identifying pronouns as healthcare professionals shows respect to our patients and their gender identity. Further research is needed due to lack of education, and pronoun use should be implemented in nursing education.

REFERENCES

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