

Introduction

The nursing process is a sequential method of problem- solving that was formalized in the 1960s. it now includes five steps: assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementing and evaluating. Assessment starts with the first greeting of the client and ends with the actual or potential nursing diagnosis. **(Jarvis, 2000)**

Assessment is the collection of data about the individual's health state. These data include subjective data, what the person says about himself or herself during history taking; objective data, what the health professional observes by inspecting, palpating, percussing and auscultating during the physical examination; and the client's record and laboratory studies. These element form the data base. From the data base, the health professional makes a judgment or diagnosis about the individual's health state. Thus, the purpose of assessment is to make a judgment or diagnosis. **(Jarvis, 2000)**

A thorough nursing health assessment allows the nurse, to obtain descriptions about the patient's symptoms, how the symptoms developed, and discover any associated physical findings that will aid in the development of differential diagnoses.**(RN.com,2006)**

Physical assessment ,is an integral part of nursing assessment. Physical assessment is usually performed after the health history is

obtained. It is carried out in a well-lighted, warm area. The patient is asked to undress and draped appropriately so that only the area to be examined is exposed. The person's physical and psychological comfort is considered at all times. Procedures and sensations to expect are described to the patient before each part of the examination. The examiner's hands are washed before and immediately after the examination. Fingernails are kept short to avoid injuring the patient. The examiner wears gloves when there is a possibility of coming into contact with blood or other body secretions during the physical examination. **(Smeltzer, and Bare, 2004)**

The physical examination should be conducted in a systematic format including inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation. While most examiners employ a "head to toe" approach, the examiner who uses a consistent physical examination gains confidence, and ensuring completeness of the physical findings. **(Rasmor and Brown, 2003)**

Barriers to implementing physical assessment skills were identified as (i) physician's performance (ii) inappropriateness to clinical setting (iii) no equivalent available (iv) physical assessment not considered a nursing responsibility (v) no opportunity to use physical assessment skills (vi) lack of time due to heavy workload

(vii) use only of problem is suspected, and viii) lack of support from colleagues.(**Sony ,1992**)

Although advanced health assessment is an important component of the Acute Care Nurse Practitioner (ACNP) role, existing educational programs for nurses don't adequately prepare these nurses to perform health assessment in the acute care settings. (**Lorenz, 1994**).

Reaby (1991), said that ,with more nurses involved in primary health the use of a wider range of nurse assessment has become necessary.

In Egypt,Benha University, at Faculty of Nursing, it has been observed that ,although, physical assessment was incorporated in the undergraduate courses, its use by the nurse graduates was some what limited .This might be due to some obstacles such as lack of use of nursing care plans as well as absence of nursing assessment sheets at Benha University Hospital wards., lack of confidence in skill performance, and insufficient time to perform these skills.

It has been observed that, the internship year training program ,lacks components , in relation to patients physical assessment. Also,pre-orientation training to nurse interns in the special care units, was always, insufficient in physical assessment .In addition , so far no previous studies about nursing health assessment were carried out, by nurses, in Benha,Egypt.

So, there is a need for such educational program about physical assessment to help in developing the nurse interns knowledge and skills, that will be used to provide an improved high quality service for patients also, this program will increase the nurse interns confidence in conducting comprehensive assessment, which in turn, will enhance the quality of their collaboration with health care team members and evaluation of patient outcomes.

Thus the aims of this study will be to, identify the important physical assessment knowledge and skills required for clinical nursing practice by nurse interns at Faculty of Nursing, Benha University ,and develop, implement and evaluate the impact of an educational program on patient physical assessment for nurse interns.