

Summary

Developments in medical technology, the growing number of older adults and patients with chronic illnesses, and the demand for high-quality nursing care have led to various, increasingly complex, professional, legal, and educational issues within the nursing workplace. Therefore, nursing students need creativity and critical thinking skills to make the decisions required in their nursing practice.

The present study was conducted to assess second year nursing students' dispositions toward critical thinking, assess second year nursing students' skills of critical thinking, and investigate the relationship between second year nursing students' dispositions and skills of critical thinking. The study was conducted at Benha Faculty of Nursing and the subjects included in this study consisted of 172 second year nursing students enrolled in the academic year 2010-2011.

Two different tools were used for data collection of the study as following:

The first tool: California critical thinking dispositions inventory scale(CCTDI); the Scale developed by *Facione et al. (1992)* and targeted to nursing students to measure dispositional characteristics. It includes two parts: *The first part:* demographic data of students' as educational qualification, *the second part:* California critical thinking dispositions inventory scale; It consists of 74 items categorize into 7 subscales; truth seeking (12 items), open-mindedness (12 items), analyticity (11 items), systematicity (10 items), self-confidence (9 items), inquisitiveness (10 items) and cognitive maturity (10 items). **The second tool; Critical**

thinking skills questionnaire, the questionnaire developed by *Mohammed (2004)* to measures the level of students' critical thinking skills. It consists of 76 items consisting twelve subscales; Tendency to evaluate external subjects (6 items), Correct use of language in listening , writing and reading (10 items), Tendency to discern matters (7 items), Tendency to discuss matter objectively (9 items), Caring about judgment of certain phenomena (6 items) , Tendency to reach conclusion correctly (3 items) , Caring about observation of matters and subjects(9 items), Openness and flexibility in dealing with matters (7 items), Identifying relations from subjects (3 items) , Tendency to avoid rumors in judgments (5 items) , Adaptation to new situations (4 items) , and Providing innovative solutions (7 items).

The Study has generated the following findings:

1. The second year nursing students' showed positive dispositions toward critical thinking (312.86 ± 29.73).
2. The second year nursing students had high level of critical thinking skills (282.61 ± 29.69).
3. There was no significance difference between students' critical thinking dispositions and critical thinking skills regarding their educational qualification.
4. There was highly statistical significant positive correlation between students' critical thinking dispositions and critical thinking skills.

In the light of the findings obtained from the present study, the following points are recommended:

1. Critical thinking as a process involved in the learning process, should be integrated in nursing curriculum. So, faculty staff should focus not only on course structure but also course assignments and the role of teacher in developing students' critical thinking skills.
2. A critical thinking profile of each student should be included in their assessment at the beginning of nursing program and making periodical checkup for students' critical thinking skills.
3. Faculty staff should continuously enhance and evaluate teaching strategies that are already used as (simulation, seminar...etc.), and introduce the new strategies that foster critical thinking as (concept mapping and role play ...etc.).
4. Paying attention to conduct periodical workshops for teaching staff and students about critical thinking skills to be competent to use these skills during dealing with patients.
5. Opportunities for further studies are recommended to:-
 - Study the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies and methods that may enhance nursing students' critical thinking skills.
 - Conduct studies that explore the importance of critical thinking as an essential skill to support evidence-based practice.