

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

Nursing clinical teaching supervision: Portuguese students' perception

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KEYWORDS

Nursing students;
Clinical training;
Supervision

Abstract

Background: Clinical training, in the nursing degree, represents half of the initial graduation time, constitutes an important learning period, where supervision plays a crucial role in the nurses' social structuring process.

Objectives: To know the perception that the Portuguese nursing students have about supervision in clinical education.

Material and methods: Integrative review, led by PIC[O]D method, which search engines were Google Scholar, the Virtual Health Library and SciELO Portugal. After application of the Relevance Test, he stood up with a corpus sample of 11 studies.

Results: All studies were considered of quality, having obtained a final classification higher than 75%. Students highly value the clinical instruction context and a positive affective and relational atmosphere, for which it is essential that the supervisor leaves the positions of evaluator, authoritarian, intimidating and even verbal and non-verbal aggressiveness, in order to establish with students an informal relationship and proximity.

Conclusion: The professional knowledge of the supervisors must match the professional act in a contextualized reality, allowing students learn to critically analyze, consolidating the knowledge acquired previously and becoming aware of the different roles and skills you need to develop not only in a cognitive and technical perspective but also in an affective and relational perspective.

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Background

Clinical teaching is an integrative learning period that mobilizes knowledge, fundamental to the transformation of identity, an important socializing space of nurses. In the time and place where clinical teachings occur, nurses and nursing students draw the main intelligibility frames, supportive of the change and social construction of the career.¹

According to Alarcão and Tavares, clinical supervision is a “process in which an experienced and well informed person guides the student in the human, educational and professional development, in a practice systematic monitoring attitude mainly through reflexion and experiment procedures”.² The authors define supervision as a process in which an experienced professional accompanies, collaborates and helps in the training of another, with an inferior level of professional development.

Supervision is understood by Ribeiro¹³ as a mediator process on the learning and development processes of the supervised and supervisor, and according to the nature of the created interaction’s function may grant or impede learning and development, and requires a trust and affective mutual help environment, cognitively stimulating to the progression of both interveners.

The supervisor nurses’ performance is developed around methods and techniques, as well as relation and communication related factors.¹⁶ On the same moulds, Alarcão and Tavares think that in the relational dimension between nurse and student it is imperative to “create a favourable environment, a positive affective-relational and cultural atmosphere, of mutual help, reciprocate, open, spontaneous, authentic, cordial, empathic, collaborative and solidary”.²

Through the integration on working teams, students create more equitable and closer relations, learning with nurses the clinical practice that facilitates their future insertion on the working world through the organizations’ rules of functioning. Nursing clinical teachings supervision occurs on the context of a relational triad, involving the patient, the nurse and the student, where the first is constituted as a resource on the knowledge area and collaborates with the nurse on the information sharing and implementation of strategies guided to the student, the centre of the learning process. In this supervision process two types of interveners are integrated: the institutional interveners and the actors.¹²

The option for the theme “Nursing clinical teaching supervision: Portuguese students’ perception” came after the realization of many clinical teachings, where it was noticed that the supervisor nurse has great influence on trainees, being thus considered pertinent and of great importance. In all clinical teachings diverse feelings facing numerous clinical practice situations were lived, being the future nursing professionals’ formation responsibility of all and not just the teaching institutions.

The overall rules that oversee Nursing Education in Portugal are defined on the Decree-Law n° 353/99 of the 3rd September, with clinical teachings (CT) supported by the Ordinance n° 799-D/99, of the 18th September.

With the present integrative review, recurring to the PI[C]OD method,¹⁰ the answer to the following question was searched: What perception do Portuguese nursing students have about clinical teachings supervision?

It is thus pretended to contribute to the increment of quality of the Portuguese nursing students’ orientation during clinical teachings, and consequently improving the health cares provided by the supervisor nurse, the student, future nurse, and the nursing team.

Material and methods

In order to answer the investigation question, an integrative review, following the PI[C]OD method to the bibliographic research, was performed, in order to systematize the information gathered in the studies (Table 1).

The inclusion criteria were studies performed with Portuguese nursing students during clinical teachings, date of publish equal or more recent than 2003 and the access to articles available in full text. The exclusion criteria were studies performed with foreign nursing students or published before 2003 (Table 2).

The studies research and selection was performed on the Google Scholar, “Biblioteca Virtual em Saúde” and SciELO Portugal, during the period comprised between September and December 2015, following a standardized research using all the key-words –descriptors– in all searches (Fig. 1).

Results

Facing the selected studies for the integrative revision, a reflection on the methodological aspects and validity of attained conclusions was performed. In order to objectify the research question “What perception do Portuguese nursing students have about clinical teachings supervision?”, the results of a documental corpus comprised of eleven studies performed by Talaia,¹⁸ Ferreira,⁹ Martins,¹¹ Barroso,⁵ Santos,¹⁵ Rosa,¹⁴ Correia, Alves and Vilaça,⁷ Barbosa,⁴ Belo,⁶ Correia⁸ and Soares et al¹⁷ were analysed.

Such analysis revealed the feelings more often referred by nursing students in Clinical Teachings (CT) are, globally, capacity/incapacity to articulate theory and practice, pleasure/displeasure, stress and chock facing the differences between theory and practice. The most valued competences are cognitive and relational/communicational, being the technical ones less valued. It was possible to identify several factors influencing clinical teaching learning, namely the place where it is held, health area, curricular organization, multiprofessional team and supervisor.

Table 1 PI[C]OD specific method

Acronym	Definition	
P	Participants	Portuguese nursing students
I	Intervention	Clinical teachings
C	Control or comparison	Perception differences
O	Outcomes	Students perception on supervision
D	Study design	Qualitative and quantitative approach studies

Table 2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the studies selection

Selection criteria	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Participants	Portuguese nursing students, in clinical teaching	Foreign nursing students
Intervention	Clinical teaching	All studies not referring to clinical teachings
Comparisons	Explore if the perception differences is related to some variables such as: Year of study, Nursing practice area	
Outcomes	Study the variables: – Perception the students have about supervision – Desirable competences on the clinical teaching's place supervisors – Supervision relations	All the studies not analysing the inclusion variables
Design	Quantitative and qualitative studies Master's degree dissertations and Doctoral Thesis Systematic reviews with and without metaanalysis	Other designs beyond the inclusion ones

In what concerns the most valued competences by students relating their supervisor, communicative-relational ones are highlighted, such as being able to make the student feel well in CT, followed by availability and fairness. Students attribute value to several selection criteria of CT supervisors, being the professional experience as a nurse the most valued, criteria patent in the Martins¹¹ study.

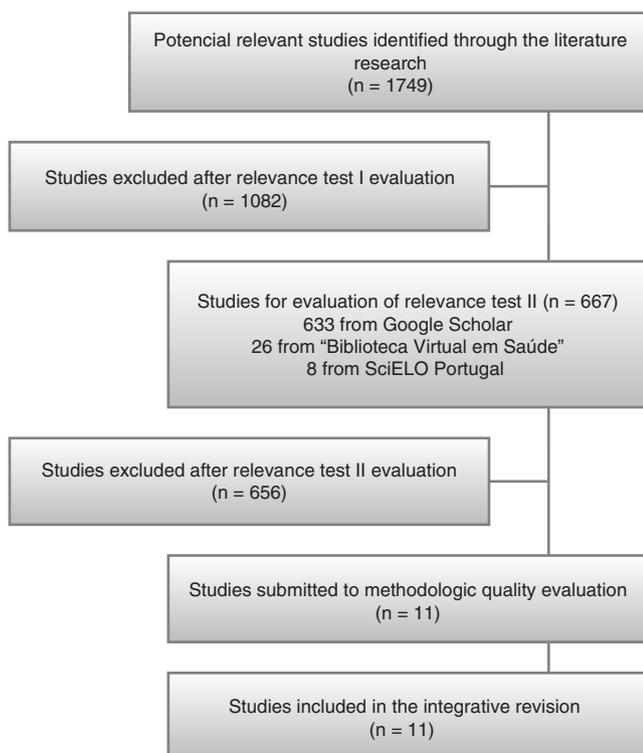
In the study performed by Talaia¹⁸ it was showed that in the Portuguese students' perspective, supervision is a privileged moment of equality relations, trust, interaction and mutual respect, being the individualized and with constant feedback supervision process valued, being this an idea transversal to all analysed studies. This result is corroborated by Ferreira,⁹ where a help and comprehension based

supervision relation stood out. Meanwhile, in the same study it was noted that as students were supervised by four persons, occasionally some did not act in a way to encourage learning.

In the same way, Santos¹⁵ found that on what concerns the profile that students consider appropriate to their supervisor nurse during nursing CT, it should be guided by the mutual help spirit, accompanying students during the whole competence development process on the several levels of knowledge and knowledge acquisition, allowing students to be independent and to act autonomously in care giving. These perceptions are corroborated by those of the students on the study of Rosa,¹⁴ where they showed to appreciate their auto-implication on their learning process on several domains, namely definition of objectives and goals, as well as planning of activities to develop. It is thus considered that learning in CT is the result of the process that leading to behavioural changes may also include changes in the way of thinking, feeling and acting. These premises are in-line with the findings of Barbosa⁴ whose study showed that nursing students consider that the supervisor must be gifted of both personal and professional qualities, fundamental to the success of the students' formation. Barbosa⁴ also concluded that on the personal supervisors' characteristics students highlight empathy, positive self-esteem, ease of interpersonal relationships, the listening, observation and analysis capabilities and good communication.

Similarly to the previous studies, Correia⁸ noticed that students thought that the supervision relationship was based on an affective-relational and cultural ambience, of mutual-help, openness, cordiality, empathy, authenticity and motivation, being that the final CT critical reflection showed that students confronted their personal "self" with the future nurse "self" by critically analysing their course. It was also noticed that the fact the supervisor belongs to the CT's institution added value.

On the study performed by Belo,⁶ students were of the opinion that the CT supervision was neither adequate nor learning facilitator. It was recognised that supervisors are the main piece for their professional growth, but however admitted the need to perfect some competences. Similarly to the already mentioned studies, students attribute a great importance to communication on the supervision relation,

**Figure 1** Diagram with the studies selection process.

with the nuance of many insufficient communication situations and awareness of fragilities, even though on some cases there is evidence of self-learning competences. This way students participating on the study revealed feelings of fear, rage, frustration, anxiety and impotence, incompatible with a supported orientation relationship that characterizes supervision. In this context, Correia, Alves and Vilaça⁷ concluded that the CT nursing students' perception relative to the supervision process leads to a need to (re) think practices and to deepen the future nurses formative process, both on the scientific dimension terms of the career, and on the level of development of critical-reflective analysis skills, that cooperate on their personal and professional development.

According to Soares et al,¹⁷ the supervision concept is perceived by students as a process that favours their learning. Their conception about the supervision process allows evaluation, in its formative perspective, coherence between theory and practice, and skills development, a transversal idea to all analysed studies. The same authors verified that students conceive and understand supervision as a process of systematic accompanying and guidance, enhancer of the development of personal and professional competences, recurring to strategies favouring of learning, even though stimulator and inhibitor feelings have emerged, nevertheless potentiating the students' maturity development. The idea that the CT will mark the students is imprinted in all the studies, both at their academic formation and professionally, admitting that it is from the CT that their professional identity will be built. Therefore, it was admitted that in order to attain these premises it is important to establish an affective and sharing relationship with the supervisor.

According to Martins,¹¹ students consider the following factors as very important to the supervision process: the way supervisors of the CT place are distributed, the number of students per nurse and nurses per student that, in both cases shouldn't be more than one, as well as the way they are selected. In what concerns this final aspect, students referred many criteria, being the experience as a nurse, mainly in the area where exerting functions, is one of the most valued, given the importance on clearing doubts, as well as in the acquisition of professional autonomy. Relatively to the functions developed by the supervisor on the service, students' opinion is that he shouldn't be very busy and should give cares, be experienced in internships supervision, have authority in the service, be recognised by the others, be of the same gender as the student, have a collaborative and sharing attitude as well as remain in the service during all the internship period, not having vacations during that time. According to the author, students admitted that communication and work between teachers and CT's place supervisors does not always occur and meetings between them are frequently restricted to the beginning and end of the CT, which according to them, makes the relationship between all the elements of the supervision process difficult, and leads frequently to the existence of inconsistencies on the internship goals. The study's evidence reveals that a consistent supervision practice, according to the critical students' representation, is conditioned by many variables, contextual and organizational, of normative, formative and restorative nature, that range from the multiplicity of functions of the supervisors

with the inherent work overload and lack of time to their development, to the lack of formalization of norms and policies on the students' supervision, through creation of protocols and guidelines, but also goes through continuous formation and a net of support and incentive.

As such, the scientific evidence suggests that supervisors should be aware of the importance of their role to the students' acquisition and development of competences, for the development of clinical experience, also assuming themselves as important sources of continuous support of the students, as referred by Abreu.¹

In brief, the analysis of the eleven articles that constituted the documental corpus of the present work, reveals the importance of creating an affective relational environment on the formative and supervision processes to encourage the interest in the clinical practice and contents of the learning process. Of the referred analysis one can say that several aspects nursing students on CT considered essential to exist on the supervisor emerged, namely: transparency, honesty, equality of opportunities, flexibility and kindness with mistakes. It is evident that the quality of any supervision process has a fundamental importance on the nursing students' personal and professional knowledge construction processes, in the development of a critical and reflexive practice, and consequently on their professional identity.

Discussion and conclusion

The personal interest on the area became a preponderant factor to the choice of the theme, since as CT interveners we face with the analysed situations.

Some difficulties and limitations on the studies' selection were noted, being this a process that turned out to be of great complexity. The reduced number of articles on the theme was limitative, since the great majority were Masters' Degree dissertations, and most articles found published in Portuguese did not approach the students' perception but the supervisors' one, and as such were discarded on the Relevance Test II. It is though possible to affirm that basing on the selected studies analysis, it is possible to answer globally to the previously stated on this integrative literature review question that we state again: *What perception do Portuguese nursing students have about clinical teachings supervision?*

It is concluded that students value much the CT context, considering it an opportunity to transfer the knowledge acquired in school, being this a reality with which they were confronted, were they need to know how to conjugate theory and practice, not always an easy process.

Students see the supervisor as someone who is there to much more than evaluate, attributing them the role of facilitators, aiding the student to learn to learn through reflection. A positive affective-relational ambience is overvalued, to which it is necessary that the supervisor abandons the authoritarian, intimidator and even of verbal and non-verbal aggressive evaluator postures, as well as many of their representations, and to establish with the students a proximity and informal relationship. The professional knowledge of the supervisors should coincide with the professional act in a contextualised reality, allowing students to learn to critically analyse, consolidating previously

acquired knowledges, and becoming aware of the different roles played by the nurse, as well as the competences required to develop for their activity. It has been shown that it is around this experiential learning base that the professional identity of nursing students emerges, and where they can attain their own autonomy. However, for this to happen, according to the analysed studies, the supervision process must be marked by availability, patience, will to teach, openness and dialogue, being these the characteristics identified by students in their supervisors, that were consistent with their personal and professional development. The affective-relational ambience was present on most analysed studies, according to the students' narratives.

It matters to highlight that only in the study of Belo,⁶ the perception of the nursing students on the CT supervision did not fit the advocated theories, having they exposed that the supervision process wasn't neither adequate nor learning facilitator, revealing the students feelings of fear, rage, frustration, anxiety and impotence, incompatible with a relationship of supported guidance that characterizes supervision.

Of the students' expectatives for the CT on the various studies are present the professional preparation, knowledge consolidation and personal development, based on the diversity of proportioned learning situations, foreseeing the consolidation of a safer and more autonomous attitude, which implies an affective-relational assertive environment between supervisor/student, on a constant feedback between the many players of the supervision process.

Facing the attained results, pertinent aspects were identified, that allow us to make a few suggestions: the creation of institutional partnerships between schools and the health institutions where CT are held should be reinforced, in order to facilitate the articulation of the supervision process; nurses/supervisors should be aware and motivated to the students' supervision process based on the acknowledgement of their role and formation investment; invest more in formative proposals directed to teachers and supervisor nurses in the clinical supervision field, reinforcing the didactic and pedagogic skills. The specificity of the CT demands learning strategies underpinned in a constructivist perspective, with emphasis on the positive reinforcement in order for students to feel safer and confident, favouring learning and minimizing the impact of stressful situations.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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