

Shining a Light on BSN Student Knowledge of Pediatric Oral Health Using Interprofessional Education

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BACKGROUND

Baccalaureate nursing students learn how to perform a head, neck, and oral (HNO) assessment early in undergraduate nursing curriculum. However, oral assessment skills are often overlooked in pediatric nursing clinical practice². This gap is concerning as early childhood caries are one of the most significant chronic diseases affecting children, according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentists¹. Inadequate training of nursing students has been identified as a barrier to implementing effective oral health assessment and education for children and their families⁴.

INTRODUCTION

- As part of an ongoing project, nursing, dental hygiene, medical, speech, and audiology students provide free health screenings at an urban, low-socioeconomic elementary school through an Interprofessional Education (IPE) event.
- During these screenings, faculty identified gaps in nursing students' knowledge and confidence when performing comprehensive head, neck, and oral (HNO) examinations.
- IPE is shown to positively effect health needs of pediatric and underserved populations³.

PURPOSE

- The purpose of this study was to improve nursing student knowledge and confidence in performing pediatric HNO examinations.
- Improved competency in these assessments may contribute to enhanced comprehensive nursing assessments and improved pediatric oral health outcomes.



INTERVENTION

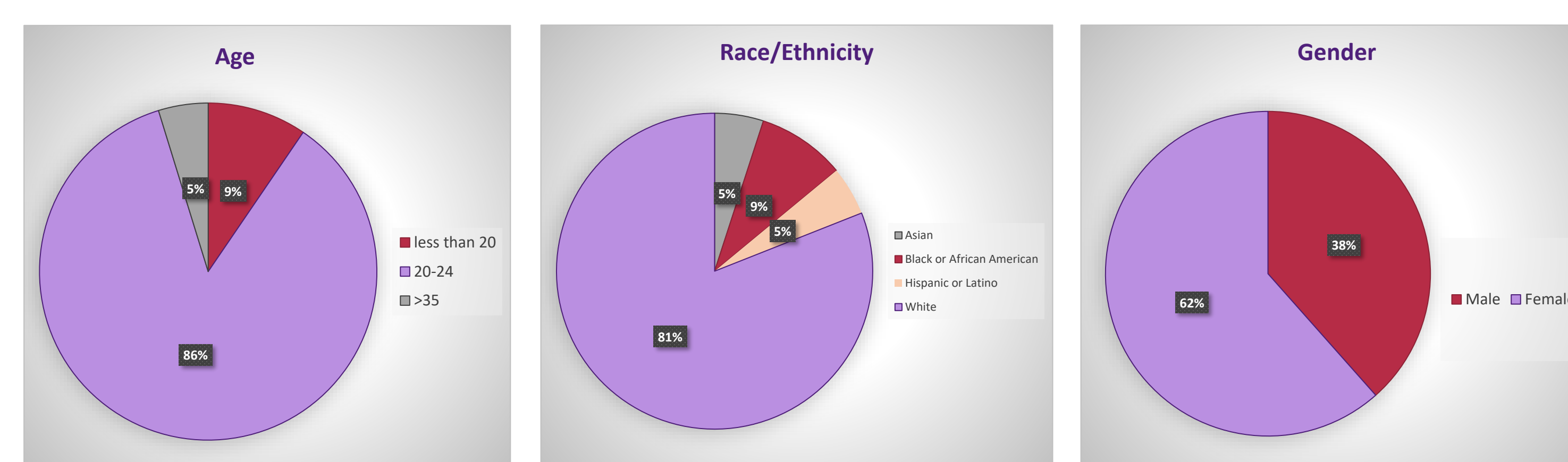


- In collaboration with a dental hygiene faculty member at a local university, a list of skills required for a HNO exam were developed.
- During the event, nursing students were paired with dental hygiene students to perform a HNO exam with nursing and dental faculty support.

METHOD

- Using Qualtrics, a fifty question pre- and post-survey was sent to students to assess confidence performing the various aspects of a HNO exam via a Likert scale.
- Interval data was used to compare pre and post-survey results.
- Descriptive statistics were used for student demographics.
- Qualitative data was used for open-ended questions.

FINDINGS



SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS

Undergraduate nursing students reported improved confidence performing HNO examinations following the intervention, with the highest increase in evaluating dentition. Qualitative feedback indicated that students desired additional practice opportunities and resources, such as demonstration videos, to better prepare for clinical practice. These findings suggest a need for additional hands-on demonstrations, classroom activities, and video-based resources to support undergraduate nursing students in pediatric clinical settings.

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