Social Anxiety Among Nursing Students

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INTRODUCTION
Social anxiety is the constant excessive fear of social environment. It becomes a major problem to today’s society. Its prevalence among younger people is increasing each year (Ghezelbash et al., 2015). Nursing is a profession that requires social interactions. Anecdotal evidences indicated that nursing students are experiencing social anxiety. There are, however, limited studies published on this issue in developing countries. Thus, this study was conducted to explore social anxiety among nursing students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. What are the experiences of social anxiety among nursing students?
2. What are the factors that contribute to social anxiety among nursing students?
3. How did the nursing students cope with social anxiety?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
1. To explore the experiences of social anxiety among nursing students.
2. To identify the factors that contribute to social anxiety among nursing students.
3. To identify the nursing students’ coping strategies on social anxiety.

1. Experiences of social anxiety
1.1 Anxiety-producing events
Participants encountered social anxiety especially during their clinical placement:
"... usually in the ward, the anxiety just come to me ... during ward round ... when being asked by doctors or nurses and when performing procedures, especially when people are observing ..." [Anna]
Some stated having social anxiety during seminar presentation:
"... I dont like presentation (sigh) ... I don't really like crowds or when all eyes are on me ... watching me speaking in public ... I don't feel comfortable with it ..." [Chelsea]
A study by Mlek (2011) consistently identified social anxiety as the fear and avoidance when one is performing or when simply being observed.

1.2 Manifestations of social anxiety
Study participants stated they exhibited peculiar bodily effects preceding to having social anxiety:
"... my hand tremor and my heart pounds each time I get anxious or feeling stressed ...", [Eoin]
Socially anxious people tend to exhibit hand and voice tremors as well as an increased heart and respiration rate (Varcabro, 2008).

3. Coping with social anxiety
Participants reported that exercising is one of the coping method they used to alleviate social anxiety:
"... although exercising after clinical placement is very tiring, I find that it does help me. I am not as emotional when exercising. It distracts my thought from the stresses and anxiety I encountered earlier during clinical placement ...", [Anna]
They also reported seeing peers to divert their mind:
"...my roommate is part of my coping, he is also one of my nursing colleagues, he understands how I feel like it's so nervous during clinical setting he is also very supportive ...", [Mike]
A study by Mlek (2011) similarly indicated that exercising is one of the most common coping methods used to overcome social anxiety and helped (Demptzer, and Montray, 2008) found that seeking social support from family and friends helps to overcome social anxiety.

CONCLUSION
This study has highlighted nursing students’ experience with regard to social anxiety as well as factors that could trigger them. The students used various strategies to cope with their social anxiety.

REFERENCES