

Enhancing Critical Care Competency: The Power Of VR Training For Nurses

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Abstract:

Nursing education emphasizes the translation of theoretical knowledge into practical skills to ensure patient safety. Clinical experiences, however, often present challenges for students, such as medication errors, decision-making in unforeseen situations, and communication difficulties with patients and healthcare teams. These challenges can potentially compromise patient safety. Upholding the ethical principle of "primum non nocere" (first, do no harm) is paramount for nurses, and fostering a culture of patient safety is crucial during nursing education. Traditionally, clinical environments utilize mannequins and simulated labs to provide students with practical experience. However, virtual reality (VR) simulations offer a compelling alternative by creating realistic clinical scenarios with potential risks and complications. This immersive technology allows students to develop essential skills, build confidence, and prepare for real-world clinical practice. This study investigates the impact of VR exercises in nursing education on the acquisition of clinical skills and its potential contribution to enhanced patient safety.

Keywords: Simulation, Virtual reality, Medical devices, Critical care, Nurse competency, Nursing education.

1. Introduction:

Despite the incorporation of therapeutic breakthroughs, the complexity of the patient's condition, and the total attention that patients and their families need, intensive care unit (ICU) nursing care for critical disease patients requires specialist training. Before their clinical rotations, students must comprehend the complex situations that face critically sick patients in intensive care units (ICUs) to plan, prioritize, and coordinate treatment (1-3). Teachers struggle to persuade students without previous experience in such settings to understand the situation and perform an effective nursing evaluation to identify patients' needs and offer appropriate care. Students' nervousness and tension before ICU clinicals exacerbates the problem. Due of the criticality of the patients they will be accountable for, their inadequate technical knowledge, and the unpredictability of a new situation (4,5).

High-fidelity therapeutic modeling lets students experience dynamic, controlled, and safe medical scenarios. These strategies also reduce anxiety and boost self-confidence before clinical assignments. Financial and administrative tools are needed to create superior simulation-based scenarios (6-8). Saab et al. (9) suggest VR as an alternative to clinical simulations, which are resource-intensive. VR is more cost-effective, resource-efficient, and location- and time-independent, yet it still offers anxiety-free and low-risk acquisition.

Virtual reality allows nursing and medical students to learn a wide range of skills in different locations and clinical circumstances of variable complexity. Simulations of wound care, disasters, and crises provide learner-centered training (12-15). A comprehensive review by Plotzky et al. (10) describes many nursing education VR simulation approaches. The evaluation finds little research on immersive VR situations using HMDs alone. Several researches have used VR for technical teaching in life-threatening patient care, including cardiac resuscitation, but few have developed integrated and complete scenarios. In this context, Horwitz (16) suggests that this strategy might improve critical care practitioner education at both the university and postgraduate levels. VR is

typically used as a complement to traditional teaching techniques, although other research (12,17,18) claim it has a greater impact on student learning.

Although cheaper than simulation, the instrument's financial investment is still more than traditional teaching. While some experts argue that higher VR realism does not improve student learning, this does not justify the cost expenditure. Usability of hardware input codes, recognition errors, lack of feedback, unrealistic attributes, and poor software usability are also recorded. Motion perception may cause physiological issues (11).

2. Types of Simulations and Virtual Reality

Simulations are a valuable tool in nursing education, as they allow students to engage in tasks that simulate real or prospective situations, enhancing their problem-solving and decision-making abilities before entering real-world clinical environments. Nursing education employs two types of models: low-fidelity and high-fidelity. Low-fidelity models include three-dimensional organ designs, human corpse models of mammals, and virtual and standard patients. These models teach students about cardiac activities, peripheral IV catheter insertion, anesthesia for spinal surgery, emergency care for harm, and breast examination (19-23).

High-fidelity models include virtual reality (VR), haptic systems, and image-based, feasible, and participatory patient models. Image-based simulations help learners develop critical thinking and decision-making abilities, while real and functional simulations mimic body parts. Interactive simulations consist of computerized virtual patients that simulate human anatomy and physiology, while haptic systems and virtual reality are realistic three-dimensional simulations that interact with users via computers (23,24). Virtual reality (VR) is a three-dimensional simulation generated by a computer that provides the user with an extensive array of sensory data, enabling them to communicate with objects within the virtual environment and create the sensation of being physically present. This can be used to assist nursing students in developing skills within virtual hospital environments (24-27).

Interactivity is crucial in virtual reality, as it allows learners to

implement interventions on models to address challenges they might encounter in actual clinic settings. One application of VR is in teaching tracheostomy care and urinary catheterization to nursing students, allowing them to hone their nursing abilities on simulated patients and execute interventions with ease and assurance in actual clinics, all while ensuring no actual patients are harmed. Non-immersive and immersive VR systems are the two types of VR systems. Immersive VR offers experiences where the user loses all sense of reality in a space no larger than a room while donning a headgear and motion-sensing mitts. Non-immersive VR is a computer-generated, non-fully interactive three-dimensional environment that the user navigates and controls using a joystick, keyboard, mouse, and haptic display (28-30).

Visual reality has been implemented in various fields, including education, culture, arts, tourism, online shopping, manufacturing, military and airline industries, construction, and production. It increases students' motivation to access and apply information, promotes collaboration skills, and encourages lifelong learning (31-35).

3. Virtual Reality Simulations In Nursing Education

Virtual reality in medical education refers to computer-generated three-dimensional simulations that accurately replicate clinical surroundings. This technology allows users to practice and improve their skills without putting actual patients at risk. Virtual reality is used in medical and nursing education as well as physical therapy. Students are allowed to participate in unlimited practice and detect their mistakes in safe laboratory settings. Consequently, actively participating in these simulations improves the participants' ability to remember what they have learned and helps them analyze problems in an engaging manner (36-39). Virtual reality enables the fusion of theoretical knowledge and practical application in the field of nursing education. Virtual reality enhances active participation and fun learning via feedback. Additionally, it supports the acquisition of skills and information among nursing students, while also increasing their confidence and motivation (40-44).

According to Nehring and Lashley (46), Phillips (45) is recognized as the trailblazer of virtual reality (VR) in the field of

nursing. Merrill and Barker (47) developed an initial iteration of intravenous (IV) catheterization, while Skiba (48) introduced interactive virtual settings that could be accessed over the Internet. Research indicates that CathSim ITS effectively lowers intervention-related discomfort, minimizes the occurrence of hematoma formation, and decreases the number of required treatments. Additionally, it enhances participant motivation and confidence. Students who possess advanced skills and minimal anxiousness are more inclined to carry out efforts promptly and securely. The execution of many interventions increases the likelihood of risks and undermines the safety of patients (49,50).

4. Challenges of Using Virtual Reality:

Virtual reality simulations not only boost students' enthusiasm, engagement, attentiveness, and creativity, but also allow them to apply theoretical information and advance at their own pace. Moreover, it enables individuals to participate in practice sessions whenever they find it convenient, and without any restrictions, in safe and genuine environments. This eliminates any concerns about making mistakes that may possibly harm patients. Due to their experiential learning approach, students who engage in virtual reality activities are more inclined to experience a sense of comfort, confidence, and accomplishment in real-life clinical environments. Moreover, they are able to replicate intricate, costly, and risky operations that are seldom seen in real-life healthcare environments. Virtual reality simulations, however, need collaboration across many disciplines, financial resources, and time for creating scenarios and training instructors. In addition, prolonged usage of virtual reality (VR) is linked to headaches, eye pain, and vertigo (51,52).

5. Impact Of VR Simulations On Patient Safety

Patient safety is crucial in ensuring the safety of patients and is a key focus of nursing education. Virtual reality (VR) and simulations can enhance the quality of nursing education by allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge while developing practical skills and positive dispositions. Students who have acquired foundational nursing competencies in online environments are more likely to experience ease and self-assurance, as well as mitigate potential negative consequences of interventions in

actual clinical settings (53-56).

Verification of the patient's identity is a prerequisite for all essential nursing interventions, and studies have shown that a virtual reality (VR) scenario involving tracheostomy care can help students accurately identify patients and prevent participants from progressing to the subsequent phase. Character verification of the patient is also an important aspect of nursing skills, as it helps students focus on the same stage in the clinic (57-60).

Communication abilities are essential for healthcare professionals to safeguard patients, as inadequate, nonexistent, or miscommunicated information can lead to incorrect diagnoses and inappropriate care. High-fidelity simulations can enhance communication abilities for healthcare professionals, enabling them to make precise and timely clinical judgments. Engaging in conversations with virtual patients can enhance students' communication proficiencies, allowing them to learn how to obtain patient histories, interact with other healthcare professionals, greet patients, and carry out patient discharge protocols (61,62).

Nurses administer medications according to the six rights: the correct medication, the correct patient, the correct dose, the correct route, the correct time, and the correct documentation. Virtual reality simulations provide students with feedback and facilitate interactive learning, demonstrating how to safely administer medications. Studies have found that VR simulations have improved students' understanding of medication management, infection, catheterization of the urinary tract, and medication management (63-67).

Visual reality simulations have also enhanced IV drug infusion skills and taught students how to recognize potential complications following drug administration. For example, Vidal et al. found that nursing students who participated in VR simulations executed IV interventions more effectively with fewer errors, caused less pain, and experienced a decreased risk of hematoma formation. This indicates that nursing students who engage in VR simulations adhere to the six principles of prescribing drugs and management procedures, leading to increased patient compliance and a reduced duration of hospitalization (68-70).

Infections are the leading cause of clinical mortality in hospitals, and preventing them can be achieved through the use of virtual reality (VR) simulations. Hand hygiene is the most efficient way to prevent infection transmission, and simulation scenarios have been shown to increase understanding of hand hygiene and decrease catheter-associated infections. VR simulations also enhance students' knowledge and proficiency in various medical procedures, such as nasogastric (NG) tube insertion, disinfection, urinary, intravenous, line catheter injectable, tracheostomy aspiration, and care (71-73).

Studies have shown that VR simulations can improve students' decontamination abilities, leading to measures to mitigate the spread of infections. For instance, a study involving 20 nursing students and a computer-based VR application found that urinary catheter skills improved, while haptic VR applications improved urinary catheterization skills. Additionally, VR applications have been used to improve the understanding of port catheter injection among 77 nurses and the tracheostomy aspiration abilities of 35 nursing pupils (74-77).

Ensuring patient safety is a critical responsibility for nurses, and VR simulations can be employed as instructional tools. Studies have shown that VR simulations can help students learn fall prevention measures, leading to a reduction in patient falls in clinics where nurses conducted their duties using virtual scenarios. Collaboration has also been shown to be effective in preventing patient mishaps. DeBourg et al. (78) found that simulation studies were efficacious in fostering a culture of patient safety among 285 students and in the prevention of accidents. Students can continue to hone their accident prevention skills within VR simulations, preparing them to respond appropriately in actual clinical settings. To ensure the safety of actual patients, students should expose virtual patients to danger during VR simulations, as the initial learners can tolerate the risk while the latter cannot. Overall, VR simulations can significantly enhance the quality of care and reduce the occurrence of illnesses and consequences in healthcare settings.

6. Conclusion

Nursing education is a practical kind of education. Therefore,

students must fulfill the obligation of completing both laboratory and clinical practice. Nevertheless, as a result of their limited expertise, students may compromise the well-being of patients. Nurses have the duty to safeguard and promote a secure environment for patients. Nursing students must participate in laboratory interventions and activities that enhance their understanding of patient safety. Nursing students who are unable to participate in laboratory activities due to physical limitations may access virtual reality simulations.

Research indicates that virtual reality (VR) simulations assist students in absorbing information, developing critical thinking and teamwork skills, recognizing rare clinical settings, and effectively engaging with patients. Nursing students has the skills to provide safe patient care, administer drugs with precision, and identify physiological changes in their patients. Students who participate in virtual reality (VR) simulations have the ability to guarantee patient safety in real clinical settings.

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