Changes in intercultural sensitivity of nursing students through international education

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【Introduction】

It is necessary to improve nursing students' intercultural sensitivity for them to be able to cope with globalization. At this university, English is taught to 2nd and 3rd year students by native English teachers. International health nursing is taught to 4th year students by overseas-experienced faculty members, where students also have chances to interact with international students. In addition, there is a free elective English class. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of these spring semester class interactions.

【Method】

A prospective study design using an online self-reported questionnaire was conducted before and after the lectures. Participants were 2nd, 3rd and 4th year nursing students (n = 165) during the 2020 spring semester at a medical university in Tokyo, Japan. Intercultural sensitivity was measured using the Japanese version (Kuwano et al., 2016) of Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000). It is composed of five domains and based on a five-point Likert scale, with a higher score indicating higher intercultural sensitivity. Paired t-test was used for normally distributed scores to examine the mean changes between before and after the lectures. For non-normally distributed scores and ordinal variables, the Wilcoxon signed rank test was used. A significant level of < 0.05 was used for all analyses. This study was approved by the Medical Research Ethics Committee of Tokyo Medical and Dental University (Approval No. M2020-144). Students were informed that withdrawal from the study and their answers would have no bearing on their evaluation or grade.

【Results】

Data from 2nd (n = 46), 3rd (n = 39), and 4th (n = 52) year students (Total = 137, effective response rate: 83%) were used for the analyses. Over 90% of students had an interest in people from different cultures at the beginning of the lectures. Overall, the total score and three domains of students' intercultural sensitivity level significantly increased at the end of the semester (p < 0.001). Subjective English proficiency of 2nd and 3rd year students (n = 85) did not change (p = 0.157). The number of students who want to work abroad significantly increased (p = 0.027) (Table 1).

A significant increase of total intercultural sensitivity level was found among 2nd and 4th year students (Table 2). Three domains (engagement, difference, confidence) in the 4th year and two domains (engagement and confidence) in the 2nd year students significantly increased. In the 3rd year students, the level of one domain (enjoyment) significantly decreased.

【Discussion】

Table 1. Willingness to study and work abroad, and ISS before and after the lectures (n = 137)

Variable	Mean (median)		Z	P
	Before	After		
Willing to study abroad	2.0 (2.0)	2.0 (2.0)	-0.65	0.519
Willing to work abroad	1.8 (2.0)	2.0 (2.0)	-2.21	0.027
ISS-Total score	79.6 (79.0)	82.4 (83.0)	-5.69	< 0.001
ISS-Engagement	25.0 (25.0)	25.7 (26.0)	-3.68	< 0.001
ISS-Difference	23.6 (23.0)	24.5 (24.0)	-4.03	< 0.001
ISS-Confidence	11.2 (11.0)	12.2 (12.0)	-4.38	< 0.001
ISS-Enjoyment	9.5 (9.0)	9.5 (9.0)	-0.34	0.732
ISS-Attentiveness	10.3 (10.0)	10.5 (10.0)	-1.23	0.219

Table 2. ISS before and after the lectures of each school year (n = 137)

ISS-total score	Mean (SD)		T	Z	P
	Before	After			
2nd years	79.5 (7.3)	82.4 (7.9)	-3.22		0.002
3rd years	79.1 (7.1)	80.1 (8.1)		-1.50	0.134
4th years	80.1 (9.3)	84.2 (10.7)	-5.20		< 0.001

Although overall intercultural sensitivity of nursing students increased, it was still inferior to that of a previous nursing student study in Turkey (90.5 ± 12.7) (Göl & Erkin, 2019). Our students increased ISS in engagement, difference, and confidence through interaction with individuals from different cultures, where they could consider the situations brought up in class from different viewpoints. Their enjoyment and attentiveness did not increase possibly because they felt it difficult to communicate in English. The decrease in enjoyment of 3rd year students may be explained by a large number of assignments other than English to prepare for practical training, while a majority of students who took free elective English class were 2nd year students. Therefore, perhaps further improvement of basic communication skills is necessary for them to be able to enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.

【Conflict of interest】 None

【Reference】

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