

Original Article

Hand Washing of Nursing Students: An Observational Study

Gülçin Avşar, PhD, RN

Assistant Professors, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey

Mağfired Kaşıkçı, PhD, RN

Professor, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey

Nilay Yağcı, BSc, RN

Assistant, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Sema Vefa Küçük Nursing High School, Nevşehir University, Nevşehir, Turkey.

Correspondence: Gülçin AVŞAR Assistant Professors, Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, Atatürk University, Erzurum, Turkey.

E-mail: gulcin-avsar@hotmail.com

Abstract

Background: Hand washing is the most important way in transmission of hospital infections and is the easiest, most efficient and cost-effective method to prevent hospital infection. Therefore, health care workers should pay attention to hand washing. Especially, because nursing spend more time with patients than any other health care workers group, their compliance with hand washing seems to be more vital. Similarly, nursing students spend a long time during their studies on clinical placements and therefore have to be exceptionally sensitive in hand washing for one more reason that is for gaining this habit in their preparation for their future nursing role. The purpose of this observational study was to determine behaviors of the nursing students towards hygienic hand washing.

Method: The students observed by observers during the nursing practice. The observers were selected in each practice group. The participant of the study were 106 nursing students.

Results: Students were evaluated according to the frequency of their hand washing in required situations. It was found that 50% of the students washed their hands 1-3 times. Considering the students' reasons for hand washing; the study determined that they were washing their hands at a maximum rate of 36.2% after the medicine administration at the clinic. In terms of the duration of hand washing it was found to be lasting for 60 second or above only for a 4.7%.

Conclusion: Nursing students did not use the correct technique to wash hands in sufficient number and duration and that they usually washed their hands for the reason of protecting themselves.

Key Words: Hand washing, Observational study, Nursing students.