Evaluation of Empathetic Skills of Nurses Working in Oncology Units in Samsun, Turkey

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Background: Oncology clinics are special areas in terms of interaction and communication with the patient. In order to improve patient care, nurses working in these clinics need to develop their empathy skills. Nurses with enhanced empathic abilities can understand the patient and provide the necessary assistance.
Aim : This study aims to measure and evaluate the empathic skills of nurses working in oncology units.
Methods: The sample of the study consisted of 50 nurses working in the oncology clinics of two hospitals in a Turkish city. The research data were collected through demographic information form and Empathic Ability Scale. The data obtained were evaluated using the SPSS 15.0 package program.
Results :Of the nurses participating in the study, 82% were married, 50% had a bachelor's degree, and 42% had chosen the profession through their own decisions. The research revealed that 50% of the nurses worked in pediatric oncology and 40% had professional experience less than five years. The mean score for Empathic Ability Scale in these oncology nurses was calculated as 147.7 ± 19. We found no statistically significant correlation between the empathy scores and their socio-demographic characteristics, working units, tasks, and duration of work in oncology ($p>0.05$). However, there was a significant relationship between the empathy scores and choosing the profession through their own decisions ($p<0.05$).
Conclusion: In conclusion, we found that nurses with a bachelor's degree, those who chose the profession of their own accord, and those reported having difficulties in communication with patients had better empathetic skills.

Key words: Empathy, nurse, oncology