

**JOURNAL CLUB AS
A PEDAGOGICAL
STRATEGY:
EVALUATION OF AN
EXPERIENCE FROM
THE PERSPECTIVE OF
NURSING STUDENTS**

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Abstract: The Journal Club (JC) pedagogical strategy has been used during clinical nursing education, with the aim of promoting in students the development of skills in the synthesis and transfer of scientific evidence, as well as critical and reflective thinking. On the other hand, it allows for collaborative learning between students and nurses at the care unit where clinical teaching takes place, assuming that it contributes to the improvement of evidence-based nursing care. As a strategy that culminates in the sharing of evidence, in an environment that can be formal or informal, face-to-face or virtual, integrated into the care unit or open to the educational community, it facilitates that new knowledge is discussed among all participants and contributes to the its dissemination. The aim was thus to find out how a group of students of the Degree in Nursing at the Nursing School of Coimbra describe their experience with the JC, during clinical teaching in Primary/Differentiated Health Care in the Health Nursing Area. Maternal. For data collection, a questionnaire with open questions was used, which was completed by the students at the end of the experience. It stands out from the results that the experience was considered innovative and rich in learning. The moments of sharing evidence, debate and critical reflection, involving the participation of professors and nurses, were considered very positive. Mentioned negative aspects, related to the organization of evidence sharing. Deepening knowledge on a specific topic relevant to the area of clinical teaching, the opportunity to train research in databases, analyze and synthesize science, learn to reflect critically, were advantages mentioned for learning.

Keywords: Journal Club; Evidence-Based Nursing; Nursing Teaching; Pedagogical Practice.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing training in Portugal, after the Bologna reform in 1999, is organized according to the professional skills profile, defined by the Order of Nurses, in accordance with the *Framework of Competences for the Generalists Nurses* of the International Council of Nurses, organized in three domains: Professional, ethical and legal practice; Provision and management of care; Professional development. Regarding the 1st training cycle, degree in nursing, the training plan and curriculum design includes a set of teaching-learning strategies, which contribute to the development of personal and professional skills. In this sense, we seek to use pedagogical strategies that facilitate student access to information resources and allow students to develop their autonomy during the training process. Nursing training enables the understanding and acquisition of scientific, procedural and technical knowledge, necessary for the foundation of professional practice, in a training process that articulates the theoretical component with the practical component (LOURENÇO, 2019).

Clinical teaching provides training in a clinical context, after learning developed in theoretical, theoretical-practical and laboratory practice, being an opportunity for the student to mobilize in a real context, the knowledge and skills learned. Clinical teaching is referenced as an important contribution to improving the quality of nursing care because “the learning developed in a clinical context allows students to integrate knowledge and acquire practical and procedural knowledge” (LOURENÇO, 2019, p. 14) .

On the other hand, during clinical teaching, the student has the opportunity to experience different situations of integrated care in multidisciplinary teams, solving different health problems and learning to use critical and reflective thinking.

Ensuring the quality of health care requires that practices in use are evidence-based, translating knowledge or evidence into action. Evidence-based health care “is a process that identifies policy or clinical questions and answers them through the generation of knowledge and evidence to guide the delivery of health care in ways that are effective and appropriate, more realistic and meaningful for populations, cultures and specific contexts” (APOSTOLO, 2017, p.5)

Thus, it is essential to prepare nursing students for evidence-based practice, adding value to nursing care, improving the users’ experience and health outcomes. In this context, it is important to synthesize evidence, organizing the results of primary research, using study reviews.

The JC is recognized as a pedagogical strategy that, in nursing education, promotes the development of competences for the synthesis and transfer of scientific evidence (LAAKSONEN et al., 2013), as well as sharing this evidence in a formal environment stimulates debate and reflection on nursing care (CANAIS et al., 2019). This strategy has been evolving and the traditional models of JC in face-to-face format have been replaced by virtual scenarios, evolving mainly due to new technologies and new digital platforms, offering advantages and new opportunities (CHETLEN et al., 2017).

OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

- Evaluate the experience of undergraduate nursing students in participating in JC as a pedagogical strategy during clinical teaching.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- Describe students’ expectations regarding participation in JC during clinical teaching;

- Describe the advantages that students identified for their learning by participating in the JC during clinical teaching.

METHODOLOGY

The JC pedagogical experience took place during the academic year 2018/2019, with 159 students of the 3rd year/6th semester, of the degree course in nursing at the Nursing School of Coimbra, during the clinical teaching of primary/differentiated care in the area of health nursing maternal and midwifery. The clinical contexts, where students develop their clinical teaching, take place in primary health care units or in differentiated health care units, where they have the opportunity to come into contact with specific health care situations in the field of sexual and reproductive health. . With the JC, students are intended to deepen their knowledge in the specific area of care, to develop communication skills, teamwork and to develop critical and reflective thinking. With the organization of a formal event, for sharing the synthesis of evidence, reflections and lived experiences, together with other students, professors and nurses/other participants interested in this open initiative, it is intended to encourage students to enjoy organizing and participating in scientific events, motivating for the continuity of these scientific experiences throughout the future professional life.

The pedagogical practice consisted of an individual and a group activity. In the individual activity, each student analyzed a different article, related to the theme related to the area and defined at the beginning of clinical teaching, selected by themselves through research in scientific databases, within a time horizon of five years. The analysis of the article should contain: the description of the study (issues, objectives); study design; study results; critical reflection on the results

found, confronting them with the observed/experienced clinical practice. The group activity, included in the evidence summary, of a set of selected studies, for oral presentation integrated in a communication in a formal environment in a Forum format. Each group of students prepares a presentation for fifteen minutes and designates a speaker, among the group, to present the communication, with the rest preparing to interact, asking questions/comments during the debate. This JC Forum took place in person, at the Nursing School of Coimbra, at the end of clinical teaching, a location chosen due to the existing conditions of gathering a large group of participants in an auditorium.

The students' collaboration was requested to participate in this exploratory and descriptive study, by filling out a questionnaire with open questions, obtaining the participation of 141 students. All ethical procedures inherent to the investigation were complied with.

RESULTS

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN JC DURING CLINICAL TEACHING

Being a new strategy used during this clinical teaching, as shown in Table 1, most of the expectations found were positive. Being an "innovative" experience different from other strategies used in other clinical teachings already experienced, also led to it being considered a "motivating" experience. The option of promoting the JC Forum in an environment outside the health care units allowed a wider range of participants to be involved in the experience. The JC can enable the use of different tools, such as the forum or a pedagogical cycle, in person or virtual using digital tools (MICHELAN, SPIRI, 2019). In this case, the students valued the way chosen for sharing evidence "Forum organization", in which it allowed to bring together a significant

number of participants, in a dynamic/interactive environment.

The students considered that this pedagogical strategy was "rich in learning/new knowledge", where they had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on topics relevant to the area of clinical teaching. The "breadth/variety of the analyzed studies" gathered in a single theme, necessary for the organization of the JC Forum in thematic tables, allowed the analysis of a set of recent evidence, sufficiently comprehensive to allow students a broader view of the subjects under study. The "participation of nurses/tutors" in the JC Forum was considered by the students to be very important, as it enriched debates and reflection on nursing care, generating moments of sharing between all participants. This discussion space allows participants to reflect together on their experiences and realities. Therefore, it was a positive aspect, revealing that this pedagogical strategy shows a greater exposure of students and nurses to the knowledge produced in the disciplinary area of nursing and consequent approximation to the contexts of clinical practice (MOREIRA et al., 2022).

Of the negative aspects that stood out, the "time allocated for communication" stands out, in which the students considered it not enough to share the contents and reflections of the group. On the other hand, they also considered that the "communication made only by one element of the group" did not allow equal opportunities among all students in the group.

In summary, the evaluation of this pedagogical strategy, like other studies, presents positive aspects regarding the experience of the JC, in terms of learning and transferring knowledge to clinical practice.



Figure 1 – expectations related to pedagogical strategy

ADVANTAGES THAT STUDENTS IDENTIFIED FOR THEIR LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN JC DURING CLINICAL TEACHING

From the assessment that the students made of their experience with the JC during clinical teaching, three different categories stood out, as shown in Chart 2. The first refers to “Sharing experiences in the Forum”, which was an advantage in that it allowed them to develop “communication skills” while interacting with participants, other students, nurses/tutors and teachers. This opportunity to analyze care practices together allows for “reflection on practices”, helping to identify needs and propose improvements in care.

Although the experience of nurses/tutors was not evaluated, as other studies have already developed, it stands out that the JC as a pedagogical strategy used in clinical teaching, potentiates gains for the various participants involved. For students, it contributes to their successful learning and acquisition of skills, in the articulation of research and clinical practice, and for professionals, it can contribute to the discussion of existing problems and resolution strategies based on scientific evidence (CANAIS et al., 2019).

The second advantage identified by the students refers to the “research of studies”, which allowed them to develop “research skills in databases”, mobilizing theoretical knowledge from theoretical and theoretical-practical classes. It was considered an opportunity to train and “learn to do science analysis and synthesis”, skills that they feel are important to develop throughout the course and profession. As APOSTOLO (2017) mentions, beliefs in the value of evidence-based practice and the ability to implement best practices are fundamental to create environments in health contexts that facilitate their implementation. Therefore, developing these skills to seek, evaluate and interpret evidence, with nursing students, will enhance the continuation of this work throughout their professional lives. The students also mentioned that the JC gave them the opportunity to “deep knowledge” during clinical teaching, on topics considered useful for clinical practice, which could improve the care provided.

The third category refers to the “critical reflection/debate” that was possible to develop during this pedagogical experience, either in the individual work that each student had to develop, either in group work, or during the debates/discussions provided during the Forum. JC. It was considered advantageous to be able to “interconnect evidence with practices in use” in clinical teaching contexts,

helping them to identify needs for improving care. This work allowed them to recognize that they were able to “develop critical and reflective thinking”.

These results are in line with other studies, which suggest that the JC offers a structured and supportive environment, so that the students involved can adopt and develop the principles of evidence-based nursing, as well as bibliographic research skills and critical thinking skills. . We can therefore consider that JC is also a formative assessment method (MICHELAN, SPIRI, 2019).

participation of nurses/tutors, whose presence was considered an asset for student learning, as well as allowing joint reflection on practical situations, enhancing the improvement of nursing care based on practices evidence-based. That is why it is a promising strategy in the training of nursing students.

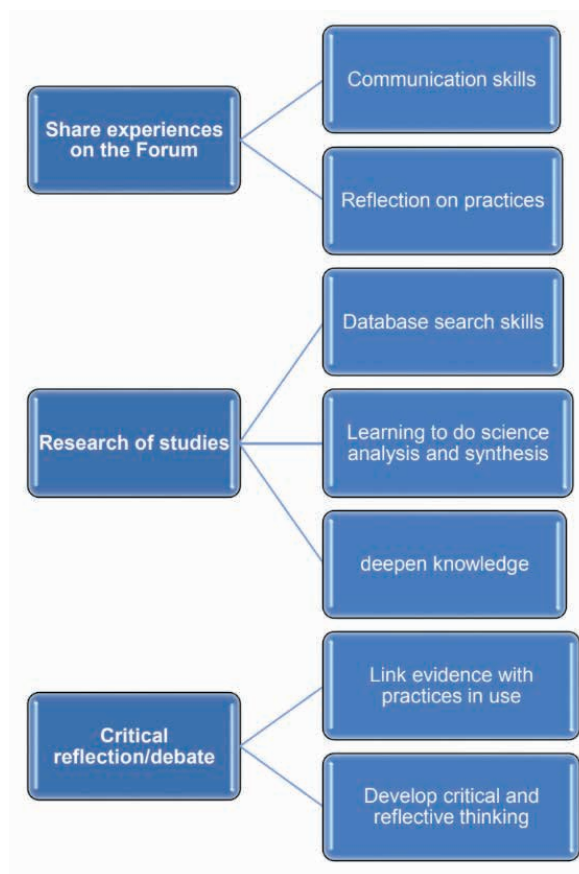


Figure 2 – advantages of JC for learning

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was verified that this experience was lived with satisfaction by all the students, having corresponded to their expectations or even surpassed them. The JC pedagogical strategy, using a Forum, facilitated the

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