

Embedding digital literacy in a nursing curriculum for safer patient care: The student perspective

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The rapid uptake of technology in health care is changing the way health professionals provide care to patients and communities. While this presents opportunities to improve, enhance and positively transform care and treatment, graduates must have the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to make effective use of the technology and data available to them. This presentation will describe nursing students' self-reported digital literacy levels and discuss the perceived barriers to the development of digital literacy.

We undertook a student survey at one Perth University utilising the validated SANICS instrument, followed by student interviews to understand the perceived barriers to the development of digital literacy. Overall, 90% of students rated basic computer knowledge and skills as at least "competent" including performing basic trouble shooting, using the internet and conducting online literature searches. However, only 55% of students considered their overall applied computer skills as at least "competent", which included using applications for diagnostic coding, to develop testing materials and extract data from clinical datasets.

Student interviews identified the perceived barriers to the development of digital literacy as interest and mindset, finances, time, and access to technology. Encouragingly, attitudes towards clinical informatics indicates 91% of students recognise clinical informatics as an important tool to provide better nursing care and that health computing will become more common, which provides researchers with the opportunity to further develop student nurses digital literacy skills.

Students must have digital capability however there are barriers to their uptake of technology that restrict their access to and use of digital tools and resources in the workplace. Our findings provide the opportunity to address students' concerns/issues around digital literacy to embed appropriate content in curricula. This will enable the delivery of improved patient care and the appropriate use of data in the individual and community care settings.