Professional Dress vs. Employee Diversity

Patient Perceptions of Visible Tattoos and Facial Piercings

Katreena Collette Merrill RN PhD
OBJECTIVES

The learner will be able to:

• Understand the impact of professional dress on patient perceptions of safety

• Identify patient, family and nurses perceptions of visible tattoos and facial piercings.

Katreena Collette Merrill RN PhD is employed by Brigham Young University as an assistant professor and Intermountain Healthcare as a nursing research consultant.

Katreena has no conflict of interest to disclose
BACKGROUND
- NURSING DRESS CODES

- Historically nurses wore white with caps to distinguish their educational level.
- Over the past several decades, a more diverse dress code has been implemented.
- However, there is no standard definition for acceptable workplace attire for nurses.
BACKGROUND RESEARCH - NURSING ATTIRE

Original Research
- Initial research on image in nursing was done by Mangum et al. (1991).
- Patients were given pictures of a ‘nurse’ dressed in different attire.
- Nursing Image Scale 10 values rated on 1-5 Likert type scale

Items Rated
- Genuine concern
- Reliable
- Confident in the job
- Attentive
- Cooperative
- Empathetic
- Competent
- Pride in the work
- Efficient
- Approachable
Hatfield et al (2013) identified that standardized uniform style and color

- Increased patient perception of nurses’ professionalism and
- Increased the ability to distinguish nursing staff from allied professionals.
- Patient satisfaction was not affected by nonstandard nursing uniforms.
The presence of visible tattoos and facial piercings for direct care providers have become more prevalent.

There is a dilemma for human resource and nursing managers on how to handle nurses with body art/adornment.

Few studies have investigated patient, family and nurses perceptions of visible tattoos and facial piercings.
What are patients, family/visitors and nurses perceptions of visible tattoos and facial piercings in health care workers?
METHODS
Prior to the standardized uniform change in June 2013, a baseline questionnaire was given to a convenience sample of patients, families/visitors and staff at 3 hospitals within the same healthcare system.

In December 2014, the same questionnaire was given to similar group
QUESTIONNAIRE

20 item survey plus demographics and two qualitative questions

Modified Nursing Image Survey

• 10 items rated on a 1-5 Likert Type Scale
  • 1= Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 0 = No opinion)

• 10 items based upon literature review and expert opinion
  • “can distinguish nurses, nurses dress professionally, nurses dress is important, color, style, safety, visible tattoos, facial piercings, artificial nails, jewelry”
Analysis

Descriptive Statistics
MANOVA to detect mean differences
Multivariate Regression
RESULTS
### DEMOGRAPHICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percent Female</th>
<th>Ethnicity (percent Caucasian)</th>
<th>Mean Age</th>
<th>Education (Percent college graduates)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondent</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>(N = 488)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
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<td>(n = 84)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family/Visitors</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
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<td>(n = 89)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>(n = 320)</td>
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Professional vs. Unprofessional Dress

**Patient Responses**

**Professional**
- Clean Scrubs
- Neat scrubs
- Scrubs are in good repair
- Clean hair and grooming
- Modest

**Unprofessional**
- Unkempt hair
- Wrinkled
- Tight or revealing clothes
- Holes or tears in clothing
- Scrubs too long
- Excessive Jewelry, makeup or perfume
Professional vs. Unprofessional Dress

**Staff Responses**

**Professional**
- Clean Scrubs
- Ironed/Pressed Scrubs
- Clean/tidy hair (pulled back)
- Closed toed shoes
- Good personal hygiene
- Name Badge

**Unprofessional**
- Dirty uniform (scrubs & shoes)
- Excessive jewelry/nails/makeup
- Ill-fitting scrubs (too tight, too loose)
- Pants that drag on floor
- Poor Hygiene
Perceptions of Professional Dress
Scored on 1-5 Likert Type Scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 0 = No opinion)

1. The dress and appearance of the nurses is important to me
2. It makes me feel safe when my nurses are dressed professionally
Patient/Family, Visitor and Staff Perceptions of Professional Dress
(Patient n = 84  Family/Visitor n = 80  Staff n = 327)

- Dress and Appearance Important to Me
  - Patient: 3.8
  - Family: 4.0
  - Staff: 3.8

- Professional Dress Makes me feel safe
  - Patient: 3.9 *
  - Family: 3.8
  - Staff: 3.5

* p<.05
Body Art/Adornment Questions
Scored on 1-5 Likert Type Scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 0 = No opinion)

1. It makes me uncomfortable when my nurses have visible tattoos
2. It is okay for nurses to have visible facial piercings while at work (Reverse Coded)
3. I think it is unprofessional for nurses to have artificial nails
4. Nurses should not wear excessive jewelry while at work
Patient, Family/Visitors and Staff
Perceptions of Body Art/Adornment
(Patient n = 71   Family/Visitor n = 69   Staff n = 311)

Scale 1-5

- Artificial Nails
  - Patient: 3.1
  - Family: 2.9
  - Staff: 3.2

- Excessive Jewelry
  - Patient: 3.8
  - Family: 3.8
  - Staff: 3.9

- Facial Piercings
  - Patient: 3.8
  - Family: 4.0
  - Staff: 4.3

- Visible Tattoos
  - Patient: 3.3
  - Family: 3.2
  - Staff: 3.1

* p<.05
Patient
Perceptions of Body Art/Adornment
BY Gender, Education, Ethnicity and Presence of Tattoo/piercing

Uncomfortable with Tattoos: 3.3, 3.2, 2.9, 3.5*
Uncomfortable with Facial Piercings: 3.8, 3.7, 2.9, 4.2*
Unprofessional to have artificial Nails: 3.1, 2.9, 2.8, 3.2*
No Excessive Jewelry: 3.8, 4, 4, 4*
Family/Visitors
Perceptions of Body Art/Adornment
BY Gender, Education, Ethnicity and Presence of Tattoo/piercing

* p<.05)
Patients Perceptions of Body Art/Adornment
Results of multivariate analysis

Uncomfortable with facial piercings
18.5% of the variance was explained by patients who were female, did not have piercings or tattoos and had a college education

Uncomfortable with visible tattoos
12.3% of the variance was explained by patients who did not have piercings or tattoos and had a college education
CONCLUSIONS
Patients, Families/Visitors and Staff generally are not comfortable with

- Facial Piercings
- Excessive Jewelry
- Visible tattoos
- Artificial Nails

Differences in responses were identified by gender, ethnicity, education level and presence of body art

- Listed in order of strongest discomfort level
References


