Ego-resilience and Health Locus of Control in Nursing Students

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Abstract. The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between health locus of control and ego-resilience in female university students majoring in nursing. Data were collected from 109 nursing students during the period from March to June 2013. Ego-resilience showed a statistically significant, positive correlation with internal health locus of control (r = .303, p = 0.001), one of the sub-domains of health locus of control.

Keywords: Resilience, Health locus of control, nursing students

1 Introduction

Rapid advances in science and technology in the 21st century are evident in the healthcare environment. This has resulted in more complex and diverse responsibilities in nursing, in addition to patients’ expectations of high-level nursing services. These circumstances demand professional nurses with strong clinical skills for coping with emergencies and myriad complicated situations [1]. As a result, university nursing students have an excessive workload compared to students in other majors because they must acquire expert knowledge and skills in addition to preparation for the national examination [2]. However, some students overcome these challenges and carry out their duties successfully while others have difficulty recovering from emotional problems or maladjustment to campus life [3].

Ego-resilience, an important concept related to adjustment, refers to the ability to cope resiliently and flexibly with changing situational needs or internal/external stress. High ego-resilience is a state that allows a person to overcome stress or adversity. Those with high ego-resilience have a positive self-image and a strong internal locus of control, and can therefore adjust successfully by responding flexibly to changing situational needs [4]. Thus, for university nursing students preparing for future professional responsibilities and campus life in a new environment, ego-resilience is a major predictor of their successful adaptation to campus life [5].

Assessing nursing students’ ego-resilience and health locus of control is highly...
meaningful. As future nursing professionals who will act as healthcare providers in the community after graduation, they should be prepared to cope flexibly with anxiety, depression, and maladaptation. They should also have a positive influence on patients’ health locus of control.

Thus, this study was conducted in order to assess the health locus of control and ego-resilience among female university students in their 2nd or 3rd year of nursing studies. The results of this study provide basic information needed to enhance the ego-resilience of nursing students who will play important roles as healthcare providers in the future.

2 Methods

2.1 Data collection and participants.

Subjects were 109 female undergraduate students majoring in nursing at one of three universities in South Korea who completed a structured self-report questionnaire. Data were collected from March to June 2013, and all participants were informed about the study’s purpose and methods.

2.2 Measurements

Ego-resilience. Ego-resilience refers to the tendency to respond flexibly to situational demands or stressful situations [8]. Ego-resilience was measured using the questionnaire developed by Wagnild and Young [8], which we paid a copyright royalty to use; the Korean version was translated by Shin [9]. This questionnaire consists of 25 items: 17 items on personal ego-resilience and 8 on the respondent’s acceptance of his/her own life. Each item was answered using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (absolutely yes), so the total score ranged from 25 to 175. A high score indicates a high level of ego-resilience. Cronbach’s $\alpha$ for this tool was 0.83 in the current study.

Health locus of control. Health locus of control is a person’s belief that all happenings throughout his/her life are caused by his/her own behavior, fate, or external forces [10]. We used the Multi-dimensional Health Locus of Control Scale developed by Wallston and Wallston [6] and translated by Cho and Kim [11]. We modified the 5-point scale to a 6-point scale in order to exclude the tendency to choose the median value. The total score ranges from 18 to 108, and a high score indicates high health locus of control.

2.3 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted with SPSS for Windows, version 18.0 (IBM Corporation, Armonk, NY, USA). Subjects’ socio-demographic characteristics, ego-resilience, and health locus of control were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Correlations
between ego-resilience and health locus of control (overall and by sub-domain) were analyzed using Pearson’s correlation coefficients. An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests.

3 Results

3.1. Socio-demographic characteristics

The average age of our subjects was 20.76 years; 94.5% were younger than 23, and 5.5% were 23 years or older. Sophomores made up 51.4% of the sample, and the other 48.6% were juniors. Most (85.3%) were from the middle class, and 57.8% had an average level of family and peer support. Major satisfaction was reported to be medium by 65.1% of subjects, 45.0% reported medium levels of self-esteem, and 43.1% had a healthy perceived health status.

3.2. Ego-resilience and health locus of control

The mean level of ego-resilience was 113.08, and mean health locus of control was 66.73. In terms of the sub-domains, internal health locus of control was 26.70, dependence health locus of control was 20.66, and chance health locus of control was 19.37 (internal locus of control was highest).

3.3. Correlations between ego-resilience and health locus of control

Ego-resilience and health locus of control were significantly positively correlated ($r = .241, p = .011$). Ego-resilience also correlated significantly with the internal health locus of control sub-domain ($r = .303, p = 0.001$).

4 Limitations

This study were limited to the nursing students of universities selected through convenience sampling, future research should generalize our findings through replication with an expanded sample size including nursing students from more diverse areas.

References