

## Assessment of Assertiveness and Self-Esteem among BSc Nursing 1<sup>st</sup> year Students of a Selected Nursing College of Hyderabad

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### Abstract

*Introduction:* Non-assertive behaviour and low self-esteem have been found to be a major problem in the Nursing profession and as nursing students studying in the Nursing College. Nurses with assertive behavior and high self-esteem are likely to deliver better therapeutic patient care. The objective of the present study was to assess and examine the relationship of assertive behavior and self-esteem and find correlation between the two among student nurses. *Methods:* Quantitative approach with non-experimental descriptive study was used in the present study. 40 B.Sc. Nursing 1<sup>st</sup> year students were selected through convenient sampling. Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (RAS) and Rosenberg Self Esteem (RSE) Scale were used. *Results:* 57.5% of the subjects were with low self-esteem and 42.5% subjects were with moderate Self-Esteem. 50% subjects were non-assertive, 37.5% subjects were assertive and 12.5% were super assertive. There was moderately positive correlation between self-esteem and assertiveness. However, there was no significant association found between self-esteem and assertiveness and selected demographic variables. *Conclusion:* Assertiveness training or other intervention may be initiated for nursing students who are non-assertive and have low self-esteem.

**Keywords:** Self-Esteem; Assertiveness; Correlation; Nursing Students.

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### Introduction

Assertiveness is an interpersonal behaviour that promotes equality in human relationships by assisting an individual to give expressions to their rights, thoughts and feelings in a matter that neither denies or demeans but recognizes and respects those of others [1-2]. Lazarus (1973) [3] defines the assertive behaviour as it is "the ability to say 'no', the ability to ask favors or make request, ability to express positive and negative feelings, the ability to initiate, continue and finish a general conversation."

Assertive behavior demonstrates respect for self and others, promotes self-disclosure, self-control and positive appreciation of self-worth. Assertiveness is the most effective way of solving interpersonal problems. Direct communication, openness and honesty allow one to receive messages without distortion, which maintains relations with others [4].

These roles are enhanced and carried out with greater effectiveness when nurses are equipped with good communication skills and assertive behaviour. McCabe & Timmins [5] reported that assertive behavior develops the self-confidence of nurses which results in effective communication and quality health care services to patients. Literature reports that trained nurses are less assertive, work passively and behave nicely at their work place as compared to general life [6-8]. Non-assertive behavior among nurses results in high stress [9,10], low self-esteem [11], frustration and mental fatigue.

Self-esteem is appreciating one's own worth, importance and having the character to be accountable for oneself and to act responsibly towards other [12]. It is an affective or emotional aspect of self and

generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves [13].

Self-esteem was defined as “one’s general feelings of self-worth” by Bong and Clark [14]. Self-esteem is a product of one’s social interactions and that both others and the person involved contribute to the final image that is projected and perceived. High self-esteem is associated with the close, trusting, supportive relationships within the family [15].

Nurse with low self-esteem relies on others for making decisions; requests permission to do anything, rarely presents spontaneity or initiative, rarely introduces new activities, is possessive about objects, has excessive demands and is isolated from others [16].

The concept of assertive behaviour and self-esteem has not been investigated extensively in the professional field of nurses. Nurses on a daily basis interact with other patients, colleagues, doctors and other staff, because the nature of nursing work requires a high degree of personal and group interaction [17-18]. Therefore, it is important to assess their communication patterns and self-esteem.

The main aim of this study was to assess the level of assertiveness and self-esteem among nursing and to find the relationship between both among student nurses.

## Methodology

The study was conducted in a selected College of Nursing on the B.Sc. Nursing 1<sup>st</sup> year students. Quantitative approach was adopted for the study. A non-experimental correlational survey design was used with convenient sampling technique. The sample consisted of 40 students. Administrative approval was taken from the Principal of the College of Nursing. The students were given a questionnaire consisting of 44 questions with Part A and Part B. Part A consisted of four demographic variables. Part B consisted of Rosenberg’s self-esteem [19] inventory consisting of 10 questions related self-esteem and Rathus assertiveness scale [20] with 30 questions related to assertiveness. The data were collected on 22/12/21017. The purpose of the study was explained and informed consent was taken from all respondents.

## Results

### *Findings Related to Sample Characteristics*

Table 1 depicts that majority of the students were Christians 29 (72.5%), in the age group of 19-20 years 36 (90%). 31 (77.5%) of students were hostellers and 33 (82.5%) belonged to nuclear family.

**Table 1:** Frequency and percentage of samples by their characteristics

N= 40

S. No	Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	19-20	36	90%
	21-22	2	4.98%
2	Religion		
	Hindu	06	15%
	Christian	29	72.5%
	Muslim	5	12.5%
3	Stay		
	Day Scholars	09	22.5%
	Hostel	31	77.5%
4	Family		
	Nuclear Family	33	82.5%
	Joint Family	07	17.5%

**Table 2:** Karl Pearson correlation between assertive behavior and self-esteem

Karl Pearson correlation	Test score
Correlation coefficient	1.003

*Findings related to assessment of self-esteem among B.Sc. Nursing first year students*

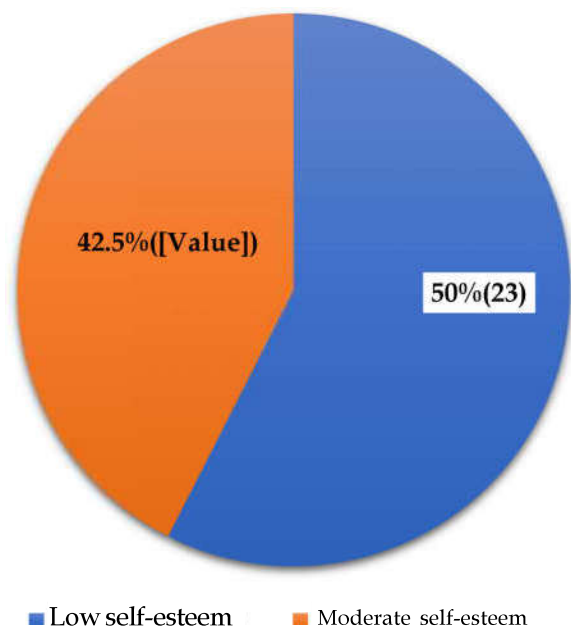


Fig 1: Levels of self-esteem

The Figure 1 shows that 23 (57.5%) of the sample were having low self-esteem and 17 (42.5%) were having moderate self-esteem and surprisingly none had high self-esteem.

*Finding related to assessment of assertiveness among B.Sc. Nursing students (1<sup>st</sup> year)*

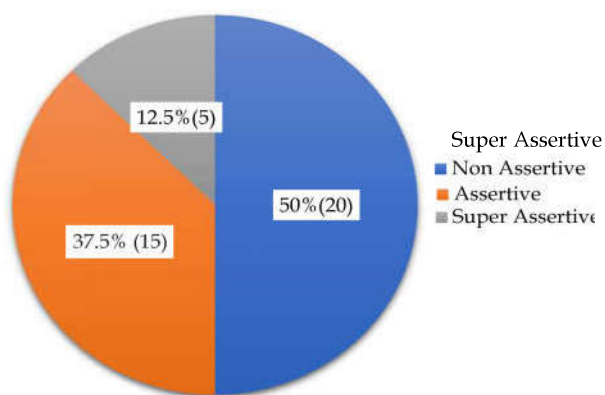


Fig 2: Levels of assertiveness

The Figure 2 shows that half of the study subjects that is 50% (20) were non-assertive, 37.5% (15) were assertive and only 12.5% (5) were super assertive.

*Findings Related to Correlation between Self-Esteem and Assertiveness*

The above table reveals that there is moderately positive correlation between assertiveness and self-esteem of Nursing students ( $r=1.003, P<0.05$ )

Findings related to association between self-esteem and assertiveness and selected demographic variables

No significant relationship was found self-esteem and assertiveness and selected demographic variables

**Discussion**

The findings of the present study were in contrast to a study undertaken among the nursing students. It was a quantitative non-experimental descriptive study with 64 samples. The study revealed that 98% of the subjects were assertive, 64% with normal self-esteem, 69% had moderate stress and 25% had severe stress [21]. The present study highlighted that 50% [20] were non-assertive, only 37.5% (15) were assertive and 12.5% (5) were super assertive. It also revealed that 23 (57.5%) of the sample were having low self-esteem and 17 (42.5%) were having moderate self-esteem and surprisingly none had high self-esteem. There was moderate positive correlation between self-esteem and assertiveness among the Nursing students.

A quasi-experimental, with one group pre-test/post-test design study done by Shaimma [22] conducted a program to enhance self-esteem of nursing students. There were six techniques used in the study like positive self-talk technique, focusing on strengths and positive qualities, assertiveness skill technique, watching motivational movies, group activities, self-exploratory and self-expression techniques. The study findings favored the effect of the enhancement program because there was increased level of self-esteem among the nursing students immediately after the program and one month afterwards. The study sample showed statistically significant difference between levels of preprogram and post-program self-esteem scores. However, in the present study the researchers have not used any intervention but have only found the levels of assertiveness and self-esteem among nursing undergraduates and also the correlation between the two.

The possible reason for positive relationship between assertive behavior and self-esteem may be that assertive persons are likely to experience a higher level of psychological well-being and a lower level of emotional deficit than persons who possess a low level of assertive behavior.

Assertive persons are able to maintain positive mental states due to their capability to efficiently manage their situations [23]. When a person accepts his/ her faults and simultaneously recognizes his/ her strengths and positive qualities, the person will experience strong self-worth and high self-esteem.

### Conclusion

The findings of the present investigation suggested that assertive behaviour and self-esteem are positively and significantly correlated. Nursing students should be regularly assessed for their assertive behaviour as it affects the self-esteem and other variables of individual. Assertiveness training may be included in curriculum to manage non-assertive behaviour nursing students.

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