**Online Nursing Programs**

In the world of higher education today, most of the nursing programs have some online courses. The trend has been growing in recent years, with some schools offering degree courses completely online. Many reasons have motivated the shift to online studying, including limited classroom spaces, lack of enough educators, and embracing of modern technology in an effort to achieve better healthcare outcomes. The increasing need for more nurses in the field also raises the urge to diversify the methods of offering nursing programs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that about 525,000 replacement nurses by 2022, meaning that the number of job openings in the nursing field will be over one million by that year (Pullen & Silvers, 2018). As such, there is almost a desperate need to have more trained nurses now and in the future. Online nursing programs aim to address this problem among the others mentioned above. However, this increasing practice of online studying has not found favor with all people for various reasons. Nevertheless, if carried out well by meeting all the requirements, then online nursing programs are as good as face-to-face programs.

Face-to-face programs have the advantage of having physical contact with the instructor and an increased number of opportunities to consult the educators as well as be reminded of upcoming assignments and so on. However, the online programs call for an increased level of dedication and discipline that will make the student so eager to learn and not be left behind by those with physical contact with the instructor. Such students have the self-motivation, which is more important than when one has to be reminded and almost forced into doing things. Online nursing programs provide the students with a new experience while allowing them to blend those programs with practical clinical experiences (Cameron, 2013). This does not prove any different from the face-to-face programs especially in terms of the content that students get and the level of competency attained.

A study by Porter, Pitterle, and Hayney (2014) sought to compare the effectiveness of online delivery of an elective immunization course and classroom studying of the same. Students were randomly selected for either of the programs, and their performances recorded at the end of the semester. Results showed that there was no significant statistical difference between the performance of classroom and online students (Porter et al., 2014). Therefore, as long as the content taught is the same, and there is an opportunity to blend things learned with practical experiences, then the two programs will not have any differences.

In the study described above, it is important to note that the students were selected randomly for the courses. That did not prevent those who took online courses to perform well. As such, the students that choose to take online courses by themselves would perhaps perform better because they have increased self-motivation to do so. The increasing number of people willing to take online programs shows that there are many people that approve of them. Moreover, there has not been any significant statistical proof to show that nurses who graduate from online programs perform poorer or are more likely to make mistakes than their colleagues that took traditional forms of studying (Pullen & Silvers, 2018). That shows the two forms of studying produce the same quality and results, with any differences being attributable to personal dedication to learning rather than the mode of study.

Online programs have several advantages that perhaps make them have similar results as face-to-face programs despite the perceived difficulties. First, online programs are highly flexible, enabling nurses to log on at any free time they get. Most of the people that could not take nursing courses or to further their education in the past due to some commitments can do so now (Cameron, 2013). Additionally, they are easily accessible to all people regardless of where they are. However, it is important for one to ensure that he or she can access practical sessions when appropriate. These programs have increased the application of technology in nursing and created an opportunity for increased innovation. Such innovations are important in the nursing industry because they make it enhance better healthcare outcomes in the future. For instance, online students become more conversant with modern technology, and they learn time-management skills.

Nursing, like any other profession in the world, has to embrace technology and its daily advancements. The number of nurses required to fill spaces left by retirees as well as to cater for the increasing number of patients and complications is going up every day. Due to these and many other factors, online nursing programs have increased, with many students appreciating them. Some people feel that the online programs are not as effective as the traditional face-to-face programs. However, statistics and research studies carried out show that there are no differences between the two forms of studying. The number of students embracing online nursing programs has been increasing. These programs enable the students to enjoy many benefits and to attain the same level of competency as their compatriots while having the opportunity to do other important things in life.

**References**

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