

Reviewer-2

Connecting with humans, building trust and rapport, and communicating effectively help improve patient care, patient care experiences, and ultimately improve outcomes. Empathy plays a role in this connection as well.

The title was hard for me to understand. I had to read it several times. The term “helping profession” is new to me. I’ve worked in a “helping profession” and in higher education, and I haven’t heard or used this term before. Perhaps it is the best and most appropriate term, but it is a little difficult to read. The term changes the dynamic of the title and in sentences throughout the paper. It also doesn’t directly specify health/pre-health students, and thus may be missed in future article searches.

For the introduction, could the link between empathy and outcomes be stronger? I feel like statements and citations were vague. “Practitioner empathy can have benefits”....what type of benefits? Or, empathetic nursing students increased caring behavior toward patients... how did this caring behavior improve outcomes? I wonder if a stronger case could be made for introducing empathy into curriculum because of the correlation to patient outcomes?

Interesting article! I like how this paper concludes with the encouragement to introduce empathy into the curriculum early on in a student’s educational experience, and how this can be achieved. I’m interested in more of the “why”. Why this study? The case for improved patient care outcomes, I’m certain is valid, but it wasn’t presented clearly and directly in the paper.

I also wonder if there are more differences in the groups surveyed, as all students in the programs mentioned may not be interested in/or become direct patient care “helpers”. Any look at online vs seated learning and teaching empathy? Any correlation to reported faith?