Nursing students' competence at graduation in six European countries

Satu Kajander-Unkuri

Docent (Health Pedagogy), PhD, Principal lecturer, RN

Diaconia University of Applied Science, Helsinki, Finland

University of Turku, Finland

on the behalf of COMPEUnurse consortium

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Background

- High competence level of nurses has a special importance for the quality of nursing care (Aiken et al., 2017).

- Several global trends related to population health have an impact on the future health care (WHO, 2020)

- Currently, the prevalent trends in nursing workforce are insufficient preparation for retirement and high turnover of nurses while service needs are increasing (OECD, 2022, 2023).

- New highly competent nurses are needed to respond to these increasing demands (WHO, 2020, OECD, 2022).

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Background

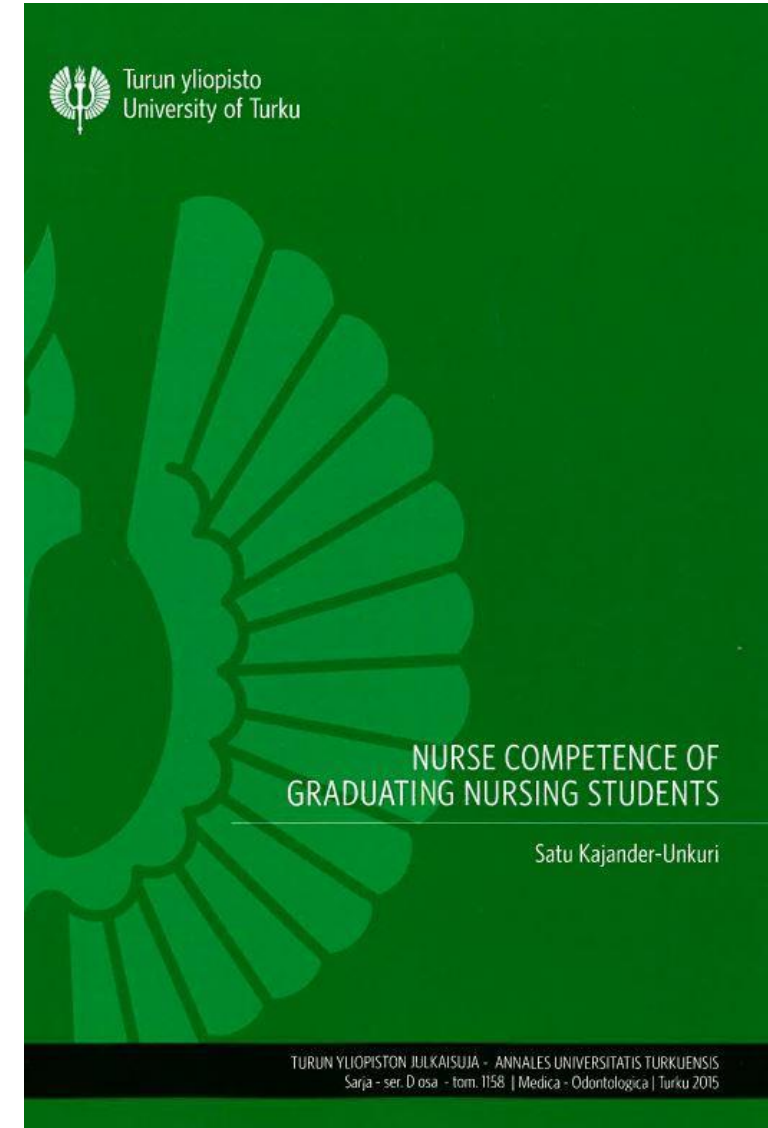## Self-assessed level of competence of graduating nursing students and factors related to it

Satu Kajander-Unkuri [a,b,*], Riitta Meretoja [a,b], Jouko Katajisto [c], Mikko Saarikoski [a], Leena Salminen [a], Riitta Suhonen [a], Helena Leino-Kilpi [a,d]

[a] Department of Nursing Science, University of Turku, Finland
[b] Corporate Headquarters, Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa, Finland
[c] Department of Mathematics and Statistics, University of Turku, Finland
[d] Hospital District of South-West, Finland

CrossMark

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NURSE COMPETENCE OF
GRADUATING NURSING STUDENTS

Satu Kajander-Unkuri

TURUN YLIOPISTON JULKAISUJA - ANNALES UNIVERSITATIS TURKUENSIS
Sarja - ser. D osa - tom. 1158 | Medica - Odontologica | Turku 2015

- Czech Republic: University of Ostrava (Ostrava)

- Finland: University of Turku (Turku)

- Italy: Verona University, Trento Campus (Verona), University of Udine (Udine)

- Portugal: Lisbon School of Nursing (Lisbon), Escola Superior de Saúde Universidade de Aveiro (Aveiro)

- Spain: Centro Universitario San Rafael Nebrija, Fundación San Juan de Dios (Madrid)

- Slovakia: Comenius University in Bratislava, Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin (Bratislava)

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Aim and research questions

To assess and compare the level of competence of graduating nursing students at the point of graduation in Europe based on their self-assessment.

1) What is the self-assessed level of competence of GNSs in Europe?

2) Are there differences between countries in self-assessed competence levels?

3) What factors, if any, are related to the level of competence?

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Methods

Instrument

- Nurse Competence Scale (NCS; Meretoja et al., 2004)

Data collection

- At graduation: 2018–2019
- Online survey/ paper-pencil survey

Study participants

- Nursing students at graduation, n = 1,746
    - Czech Republic (n = 207)
    - Finland (n = 336)
    - Italy (n = 334)
    - Portugal (n = 338)
   - Slovakia (n = 306)
    - Spain (n = 214)

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Competence

"Functional adequacy and capacity to integrate knowledge and skills to attitudes and values into specific contextual situations of practice"

(Meretoja et al., 2004b, pp. 330-331)

- Nurse Competence Scale (Meretoja et al., 2004a)
  - Generic competence
  - 73 competence items in 7 categories
    - Helping role, Teaching – coaching, Diagnostic functions, Managing situations, Therapeutic interventions, Ensuring quality and Work role

  - Each item is assessed on VAS scale (0 = low level; 100 = high level of competence)
  → $\leq$25 = low level, >25-50 = rather good level, >50-75 good level, >75-100 = very good level

  - The frequency of use of each item is assessed on 0-3 scale (0 = not applicable; 3 = used very often)

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Competence at graduation (n=1,746)
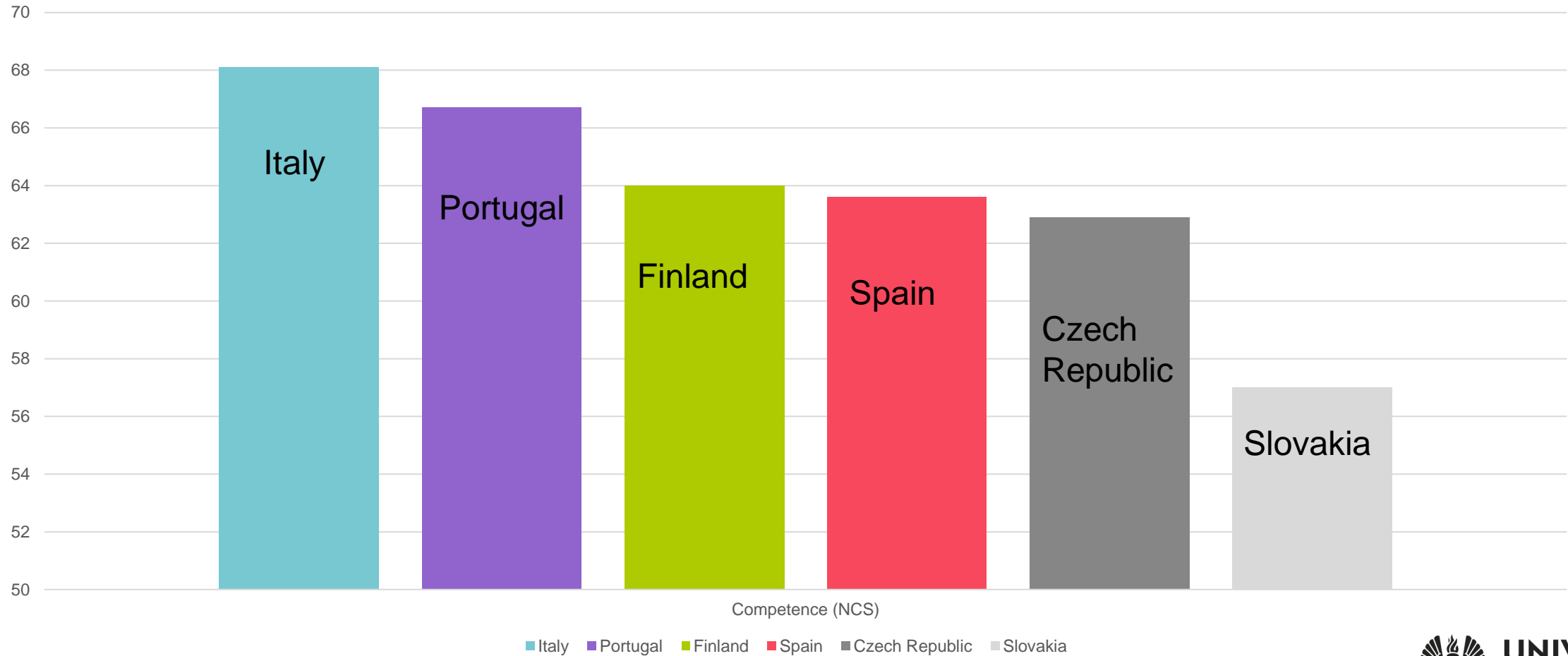
Competence categories (n=1,746)
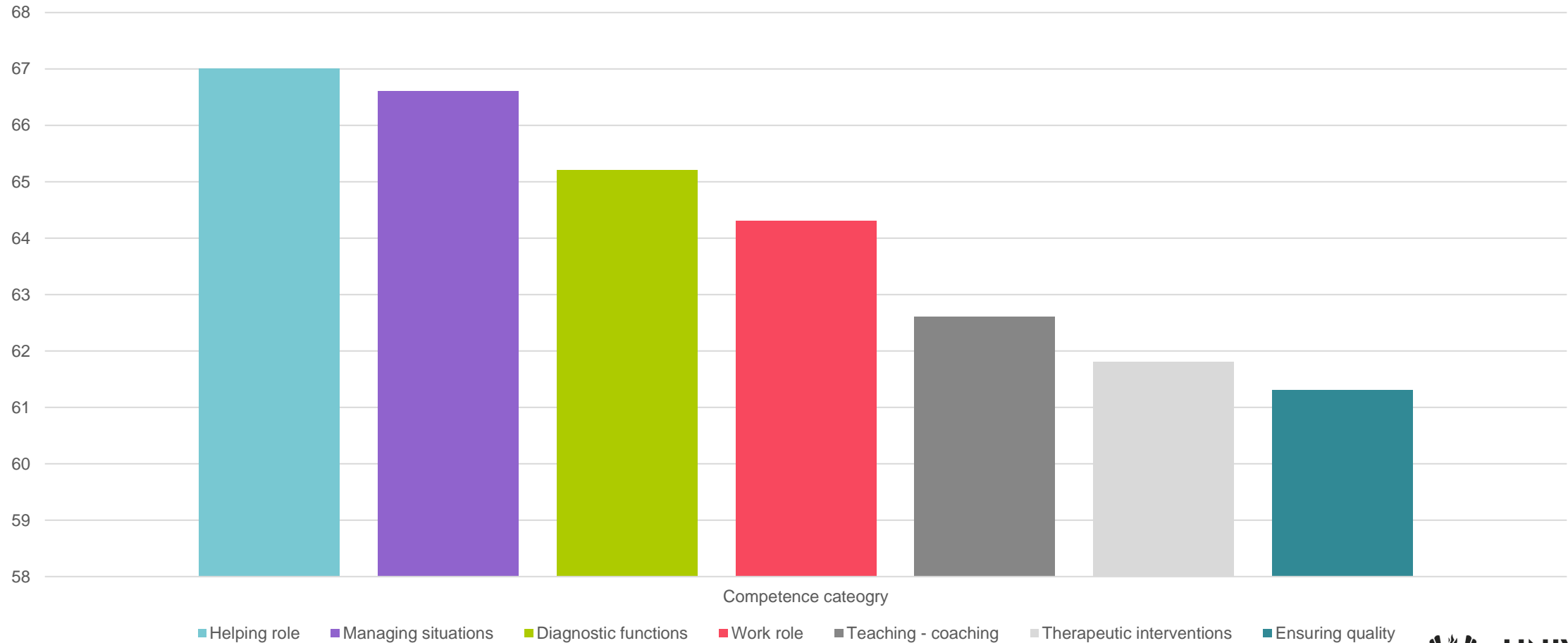
Competence of graduating nursing students

The 5 highest items (GNSs = 1,746) and their frequency of use

Item	VAS mean	Frequency of use (mean)
Keeping nursing care equipment in good condition (Managing situations)	76.7	2.48
Aware of the limits of my own resources (Work role)	76.4	2.50
Decision-making guided by ethical values (Helping role)	76.3	2.45
Taking active steps to maintain and improve my professional skills (Teaching – coaching)	76.0	2.53
Utilizing information technology in my work (Work role)	75.4	2.43

Competence of graduating nursing students

The 5 lowest items (GNSs = 1,746) and their frequency of use

Item	VAS mean	Frequency of use (mean)
Arranging debriefing sessions for the care team when needed (Managing situations)	48.6	1.13
Providing consultation for the care team (Therapeutic interventions)	47.2	1.09
Developing orientation programmes for new nurses in my unit (Teaching – coaching)	46.5	1.16
Mentoring novices and advanced beginners (Work role)	44.4	0.97
Co-ordinating student nurse mentoring in the unit (Work role)	43.3	0.97

Related factors

- Country

Related factors

- Country

- Frequency of use of competence (p<0.0001)

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Related factors

- Country

- Frequency of use of competence (p<0.0001)

- Satisfaction with current nursing degree programme (p<0.0001).

Related factors

- Country

- Frequency of use of competence (p<0.0001)

- Satisfaction with current nursing degree programme (p<0.0001).

- Work experience besides clinical practice during nursing education (p<0.0001).

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Related factors

- Country

- Frequency of use of competence (p<0.0001)

- Satisfaction with current nursing degree programme (p<0.0001).

- Work experience besides clinical practice during nursing education (p<0.0001).

- Study achievements (p<0.0001).

Related factors

- Country

- Frequency of use of competence ($p<0.0001$)

- Satisfaction with current nursing degree programme ($p<0.0001$).

- Work experience besides clinical practice during nursing education ($p<0.0001$).

- Study achievements ($p<0.0001$).

- Graduating to 1st study choice ($p=0.0052$)

Related factors

- Country

- Frequency of use of competence ($p<0.0001$)

- Satisfaction with current nursing degree programme ($p<0.0001$).

- Work experience besides clinical practice during nursing education ($p<0.0001$).

- Study achievements ($p<0.0001$).

- Graduating to 1st study choice ($p=0.0052$)

- Nursing career plan for the future ($p<0.0001$).

Conclusions

- Despite different educational solutions, and curricula, nursing students are graduating with a good level of competence based on their self-assessments.

- Competence levels differ across EU countries.

  - Differences in nursing education don't explain the variation
  - Might be due issues in working conditions and nurse profession

- Several factors are related to the level of competence

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The level of competence of graduating nursing students in 10 European countries—Comparison between countries

Satu Kajander-Unkuri[1,2] | Sanna Koskinen[1] | Anna Brugnolli[3] |
MªAngeles Cerezuela Torre[4] | Imane Elonen[1] | Viktorija Kiele[1,5] | Daniela Lehwaldt[6] |
Eliisa Löyttyniemi[7] | Jana Nemcová[8] | Célia Simão de Oliveira[9] | Alvisa Palese[10]
Marília Rua[11] | Leena Salminen[1] | Lenka Šateková[12] | Juliane Stubner[13] |
Herdís Sveinsdóttir[14] | Laura Visiers-Jiménez[15] | Helena Leino-Kilpi[1,16]

[1]Department of Nursing science, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[2]Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

[3]Department of Public Health, Azienda Provinciale per i Servizi Sanitari, Trento, Italy

[4]Faculty of Nursing, Universitat Internacional de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain

[5]Faculty of Medicine, Institute of Health Sciences, Vilnus University, Vilnus, Lithuania

[6]School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and community Health, Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland

[7]Department of Biostatistics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[8]Department of nursing, Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin, Comenius University in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia

[9]Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Lisbon School of Nursing, Lisbon, Portugal

[10]Department of Medical Sciences, University of Udine, Udine, Italy

[11]School of Health Sciences, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

[12]Department of Nursing, Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic

[13]Institute for Health and Nursing Science, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Halle, Germany

[14]Faculty of Nursing, University of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland

[15]Fundación San Juan de Dios, Centro de CC de la Salud San Rafael, Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, Madrid, Spain

[16]Turku University Hospital, Turku, Finland

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Clinical learning environment and graduating nursing students' competence: A multi-country cross-sectional study

Laura Visiers-Jiménez PhD, RN[1] | Arja Suikkala PhD, RN[2,3] |
Leena Salminen PhD, PHN[2,4] | Helena Leino-Kilpi PhD, RN, FAAN, FEANS, MAE[2,4] |
Eliisa Löyttyniemi MSc[5] | Maria Adriana Henriques RN, PhD[6] |
Maria Jiménez-Herrera PhD, RN, MB[7] | Jana Nemcová PhD, RN[8] |
Daniel Pedrotti MSN, BN, RN[9] | Marília Rua PhD, RN[10] |
Cristina Tommasini MNS, BN, RN[11] | Renáta Zeleníková PhD, RN[12] |
Satu Kajander-Unkuri PhD, RN[2,3]

[1] Department of Nursing Science, Fundación San Juan de Dios, Centro de Ciencias de la Salud San Rafael, Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, Madrid, Spain

[2] Department of Nursing Science, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[3] Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland

[4] Turku University Hospital, Turku, Finland

[5] Department of Biostatistics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[6] Department of Community Nursing, Lisbon School of Nursing, Lisbon, Portugal

[7] Nursing Department, Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV), Tarragona, Spain

[8] Department of Nursing Science, Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin, Comenius University in Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia

[9] Centre of Higher Education for Health Sciences, University of Verona, Verona, Italy

[10] School of Health Sciences, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

[11] Medical Department, University of Udine, Udine, Italy

[12] Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ostrava, Ostrava, Czech Republic

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Nursing students' self-directed learning abilities and related factors at graduation: A multi-country cross-sectional study

Laura Visiers-Jiménez[1] | Alvisa Palese[2] | Anna Brugnolli[3] | Lucia Cadorin[2] |
Leena Salminen[4,5] | Helena Leino-Kilpi[4,5] | Eliisa Löyttyniemi[6] | Jana Nemcová[7]
Célia Simão de Oliveira[8] | Marília Rua[9] | Renáta Zeleníková[10] |
Satu Kajander-Unkuri[4,11] | the COMPEUnurse-Consortium

[1]Department of Nursing Science, Fundación San Juan de Dios, Centro de Ciencias de la Salud San Rafael, Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, Madrid, Spain

[2]Department of Medical Sciences, University of Udine, Udine, Italy

[3]Department of Public Health, Azienda Provinciale per i Servizi Sanitari, Trento, Italy

[4]Department of Nursing Science, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[5]Turku University Hospital, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[6]Department of Biostatistics, University of Turku, Turku, Finland

[7]Department of Nursing Science, Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin, Comenius University in Bratislava, Martin, Slovakia

[8]Department of Fundamentals of Nursing, Lisbon School of Nursing, Lisbon, Portugal

[9]School of Health Sciences, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal

[10]Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ostrava, Ostrava, Czech Republic

[11]Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki, Finland
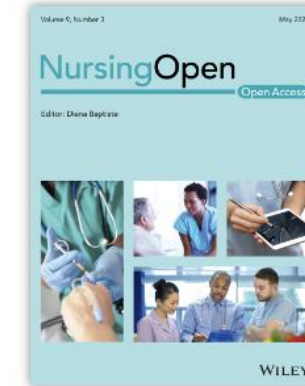
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Graduating Nursing Students' Empowerment and Related Factors: Comparative Study in Six European Countries

Laura Visiers-Jiménez [1], Liisa Kuokkanen [2], Helena Leino-Kilpi [2,3], Eliisa Löyttyniemi [4], Riitta Turjamaa [5,6,*], Anna Brugnolli [7], Filomena Gaspar [8], Jana Nemcová [9], Alvisa Palese [10], Marília Rua [11], Renata Zelenikova [12] and Satu Kajander-Unkuri [2,13,*]

[1] Department of Nursing Science, Fundación San Juan de Dios, Centro de Ciencias de la Salud San Rafael, Universidad Antonio de Nebrija, 28036 Madrid, Spain; lvisiers@nebrija.es

[2] Department of Nursing Science, University of Turku, 20014 Turku, Finland; likuokka@gmail.com (L.K.); helena.leino-kilpi@utu.fi (H.L.-K.)

[3] Turku University Hospital, 20521 Turku, Finland

[4] Department of Biostatistics, University of Turku, 20014 Turku, Finland; eliisa.loyttyniemi@utu.fi

[5] Department of Nursing Science, University of Eastern Finland, 70211 Kuopio, Finland

[6] School of Health Care, Savonia University of Applied Sciences, 70201 Kuopio, Finland

[7] Azienda per i Servizi Sanitari Provinciali, University of Verona, 38123 Trento, Italy; anna.brugnolli@apss.tn.it

[8] Department of Nursing Administration, Lisbon School of Nursing—ESEL (Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Lisboa), 1600-096 Lisbon, Portugal; mfgaspar@esel.pt

[9] Department of Nursing Science, Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin, Comenius University in Bratislava, 03601 Martin, Slovakia; jana.nemcova@uniba.sk

[10] Department of Medicine, Udine University, 33100 Udine, Italy; alvisa.palese@uniud.it

[11] School of Health Sciences, University of Aveiro, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal; mrua@ua.pt

[12] Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ostrava, 70103 Ostrava, Czech Republic; renata.zelenikova@osu.cz

[13] Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, 00580 Helsinki, Finland

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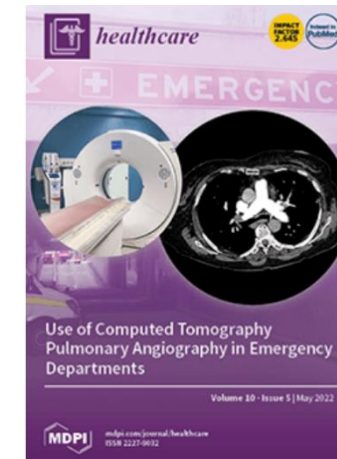
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Satu.Kajander@utu.fi

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