

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY PARAMEDIC STUDENTS IN HOSPITAL INTERNSHIPS: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Öğr. Gör. Hüseyin Yaşar

Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Turkey. hyasar@ksu.edu.tr.

ORCID: 0000-0001-8241-3375

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ahmet Seven

Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Turkey.

ahmetseven@ksu.edu.tr. ORCID: 0000-0002-2599-1918

Abstract

Clinical practice / internship plays an important role in stepping into the professional career of students studying in the field of health. This study was carried out to determine the problems faced by students studying First and Emergency Aid Program (FEAP) in a public university in hospital internship practices. The study was made with a total of 36 students, 22 of whom were women and 14 were men, who agreed to participate in the study. "Case Study" pattern, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. An open-ended question was asked to the participants to identify the problems they encountered during the clinical practice in hospital. In order to ensure confidentiality in the research, participants were given code (S1, S2...). The answers were resolved according to the given codes. As a result of the analysis, 3 main and 3 intermediate themes emerged. As a result of the study, it was observed that there were problems such as the number of cases and patients were few, the high number of students who were trained, the employees were not enough role models for the students, the students were assigned duties other than medical applications, and there were problems related to nutrition and access to the internship institution. Elimination of the problems faced by students in clinical practice / internship has an important place in gaining professional competencies.

Keywords: Hospital, internship application, internship problems, paramedic

Paramedik Öğrencilerinin Hastane Stajlarında Karşılaştıkları Sorunlar: Nitel Bir Araştırma

Özet

Sağlık alanında öğrenim gören öğrencilerin profesyonel meslek hayatına adım atmada klinik uygulama/staj önemli bir yere sahiptir. Bu çalışma, bir devlet üniversitesi İlk ve Acil Yardım Programı'nda (İAYP) eğitim gören öğrencilerin hastane staj uygulamalarında karşılaştıkları sorunları belirlemek amacıyla yapıldı. Araştırma çalışmaya katılmayı kabul eden 22'si kadın, 14'ü ise erkek toplam 36 öğrenci ile gerçekleştirildi. Çalışmada niteliksel araştırma yöntemlerinden "Durum Çalışması" deseni kullanıldı. Katılımcılara hastanede klinik uygulama esnasında karşılaştıkları sorunları belirlemek için açık uçlu bir soru yöneltildi. Araştırmada gizliliği sağlayabilmek adına katılımcılara kod (Ö1, Ö2...) verildi. Verilen kodlara göre cevaplar çözümlendi. Çözümleme sonucunda 3 ana ve 3 ara tema orta

çıktı. Araştırma sonucunda vaka ve hasta sayısının az olduğu, staj gören öğrenci sayısının fazlalığı, çalışanların öğrencilere yeterince rol model olmadığı, öğrencilere medikal uygulamalar dışında görevler verildiği, beslenmeyle ilgili ve staj kurumuna ulaşımında zorluk yaşanması gibi sorunlar olduğu görüldü. Öğrencilerin klinik uygulama/stajda karşılaştıkları sorunların ortadan kaldırılması mesleki yetkinlikleri kazanmada önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hastane, staj uygulaması, staj sorunları, paramedik.

Introduction

Ambulance and Emergency Care Technician (AECT) is a graduate of the First and Emergency Aid Program (FEAP), who received theoretical and practical training for four semesters, and has the internationally recognized name Paramedic (Yenal-Çelikli 2013).

The first program related to the Paramedic profession providing emergency healthcare in our country started on May 24, 1993 with the decision taken by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) on 22.12.1992 at the Health Services Vocational School of Higher Education (SHMYO) within the body of Dokuz Eylül University (Çevik, 2016; Çelikli, 2016a). In this period, the First and Emergency Aid Programs have been opened within many state and foundation universities. In 2016 ÖSYM (Student Selection and Placement Centre) preference guide, FEAP students are accepted to 70 departments in 60 state universities. In addition, these 70 FEAPs have evening education in 28 schools. Also, foundation universities have FEAP and provide education (YÖK, 2016). Today, students are admitted to 95 SHMYO (Health Services Vocational School of Higher Education) and MYO (Vocational School of Higher Education) FEAP located in 81 state universities and 41 foundation universities. In addition, 35 of these 95 FEAPs have evening education. The number of students who were admitted to the program, which was 11,617 in 2018, increased to 12,748 in 2019, and it is observed that the interest in the program is gradually increasing (YÖK,2020). Looking at the 2023 health workforce targets of the Ministry of Health, 27,000 Paramedic workforces in 2023 are targeted, which was 4,800 in 2014 (SHGM, 2014). In addition, according to the Health Statistics Yearbook 2018 data, 112 Emergency Assistance stations, which were 481 in 2002, reached 2,735 as of 2018 (SİY, 2019). Increasing day by day, FEAP has attracted attention as the most preferred associate degree program in recent years, and it is anticipated that it will continue increasingly in parallel with the needs of the Ministry of Health and private health institutions (Ünlüoğlu, 2002; Göllüce vd. 2017).

In the curriculum of IAYP, which is the most preferred by the candidates among the associate degree programs, in addition to theoretical courses, the course practices (internships) held in laboratories and health institutions aimed at gaining professional skills have an important place. Applications are carried out during the semester and as a summer internship. The theoretical information obtained during the course is integrated with the practice in internships and supports and complements the students in preparing for the Paramedic profession. The increasing number of students and the limited number of internship practice areas that form the basis of the profession

appear as an important problem (Yenal-Çelikli, 2013; Çelikli, 2016b). There are many studies conducted in the literature to evaluate the hospital internship practices of MYO and SHMYO students. However, a study covering the opinions of First and Emergency Aid Program students about hospital internship applications and determining what the problems they faced in this regard could not be reached. The current study was carried out to identify the problems faced by students studying at FEAP in hospital internship practices.

Method

The research was carried out with 36 students studying at a public university MYO Medical Services and Techniques Department First and Emergency Aid Program after obtaining the permission of the institution. "Case Study" pattern, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used in the study. Case studies are defined as a distinctive method used in seeking answers to scientific questions (Büyüköztürk vd. 2008).

In order to determine the problems faced during the clinical practice in the hospital, the participants were asked what are the problems you encountered in the course practices (internship) as a Paramedic student.

The data were evaluated by content analysis method within the scope of analysis technique. In the analysis carried out in four stages, the participants were given code as S1, S2... (Student 1) in order to ensure confidentiality during the coding of the data. The data examined by two researchers were evaluated independently. As a result of the evaluation, the data constituted the content of 3 main and 3 sub-themes. The interpretation phase was carried out after the editing of the themes determined.

Findings

The results obtained as a result of the analyzes are gathered under 3 main and 3 sub-themes. These are 3 main themes in the form of problems arising from hospital facilities, problems arising from hospital health personnel and other problems; In the theme 2 content, 3 sub-themes emerged as the negative behaviors of the employees towards the intern students, communication problems from the employees and non-professional employee behaviors.

Theme 1. Hospital-Related Problems

About the hospital course practice (internship), 18 of 36 participant students expressed that their possibilities were limited, there were few cases and patients, they did not have the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they learned at the school, the number of internship students in a hospital was high, and there were not sufficient number of internship areas in the region of the school. It was understood that the students were uncomfortable due to the limited opportunities and thought that they would not have enough experience when they were appointed to the profession. Some student opinions on this subject are given below.

S.9: "There are not enough patients to implement the applications. According to my observation in my internship in the emergency service, the number of patients is very low. I cannot find the opportunity to apply many of the applications I learned"

S.21: "There are few internship places allowing internship only 1 day a week"

S.25: "Since there is not enough internship places, there are many students in internships and each student cannot make practice."

Theme 2. Problems Caused by Healthcare Staff Working in Hospital

Theme 2.1. Negative Behaviors of Employees Against Internship Students

Of the 36 participating students about the hospital course practice (internship), 22 stated that the employees display negative behaviors towards the internship students, the mistakes made are attributed to students and the employees do not trust the internship students. It was understood that students were uncomfortable with employee behaviors towards them and their motivation was negatively affected. Some student opinions on this subject are given below.

S.7: " We are treated as we do not know anything. Even standing next to our internship friend stands out, we suffer under them"

S.26: " We are hurt by patients or employees in case of a minor misapplication. It hurts our enthusiasm and self-confidence"

S.35: " An intern is responsible for all the negativities experienced in the service. They put us forward to defend themselves. They hold us responsible for everything wrong thrown into the medical waste bin. "

Theme 2.2. Communication Problems Caused by Employees

Of the 36 participating students about the hospital course practice (internship), 18 stated that the employees did not guide the internship students, do not communicate adequately, and they give much more unnecessary jobs. It was understood that insufficient dialogue with students and assigning tasks to students other than medical practices caused them to lag behind in practice activities. Some student opinions on this subject are given below.

S.16: " They use us only as aide. We run errands. This negatively affects our energy and performance."

S.22: "I do not find it right to have the cleaning and maintenance to be done on the students."

S.26: " There are no approaches to students to teach something. They use us in legworks. That is why nobody wants to go to internships."

S.35: "Since we are trainees, the staff working there use us for their errands. They direct us to the services in need and get their job done."

S.36: "Asking for material without introducing the service in the service for the internship and saying something when it cannot be found "

Theme 2.3. Unprofessional Employee Behaviors

About the hospital course practice (internship) during the semester, Of the 36 participant students, 6 of them stated that the staff did not behave professionally. It was understood that there were conflicts between theoretical knowledge and practice due to the differences between the practices in the field and the education received by the students. Some student opinions on this subject are given below.

S.14: "I think that there is lack of materials and the dressings made are not recorded"

S.24: "Not paying attention to sterilization while performing the necessary applications. Not wearing gloves while applying (injection, establishing vascular access)"

S.30: " Not giving importance to being sterile or taking care of our own health while making the necessary applications "

S.36: " Misuse and opening of sterile materials used. While wearing gloves, saying that "You're late, what's the need to wear?"

Theme 3. Other Problems

About the hospital course practice (internship), of the 36 participating students, 9 stated that internships constitute an economic burden for them as they do not receive food at the internships and do not receive internship fees. It was understood that the students' failure to benefit from the hospital dining facilities negatively affects the attention and performance in the internships and the internship fee will make them more effective and behave more responsibly in the internships. Some student opinions on this subject are given below.

S.19: "It is a big problem not to give food in hospital dining halls and internship salary to the interns"

S.20: " The food of few people who do internship in the hospital is given by the hospital, and we are not paid fee even though we do more internship than high school students "

S.27: " Lunch is not served in the hospital. I would like to have natural foods in the hospital rather than eating junk food outside."

Conclusion and Discussion

Students who study in the First and Emergency Aid Program (FEAP) face many problems in hospital internship practices (Tuygar, 2016). The basis of these problems is the increasing number of students admitted to the program (Çelikli, 2016a; Demirağ-Hintistan, 2019). In addition, the number of cases/patients per student in the applied institutions is low, the negative approach of the hospital staff towards the trainees and the institution's facilities are not determined by considering the intern students (Polat vd. 2018; Öztürk-Kıraç, 2019).

As a result of the current study, it is seen that the most important one among the problems is the negative behaviors of hospital staff towards intern students. In the study of Yenil and Çelikli (2013), it was stated that the students had the most problems with the medical staff in the internship. In another study, it was found that the employees had problems with the students and the reason for this problem was due to the idea of the students to replace their own working positions (Öztürk-Kıraç, 2019). We think that the hospital staff's negative behavior towards the intern students is due to the lack of trust in the intern students. In this context, we anticipate that the problem can be solved by establishing communication between academic staff at MYO and SHMYO, hospital staff and intern students prior to clinical practice.

Within the scope of the problems arising from the medical personnel working in theme 2 hospital, it was determined that the employees did not show guiding behaviors to the intern students, did not communicate adequately and gave unnecessary jobs to the intern students. In Tuygar's

(2016) study, it is stated that the positive role model of the staff working in the internship institutions will contribute to the personal and professional development of students. In the study conducted with 141 nursing department students who went to clinical practice internship, it was determined that there was not much case diversity in hospital practices and there was a lack of communication with nurses working in the clinic (Aydın-Argun 2010). In another study, it was determined that the students were not adequately role-modelled by the nurses working in the clinic, that the students were not given adequate support for the problems and healthy communication was not established (Aygün Kostak vd. 2012). In another study conducted with 296 nursing department students, it was found that during the hospital internship, students could not fully apply the theoretical knowledge they learned at school and were not supported by the hospital staff (Karadağ vd. 2013). It is believed that students who are not directed and given non-professional duties will not be able to reach sufficient competence in practical applications. In this regard, it is recommended that internship supervisors who provide clinical guidance to the students perform more frequent checks in the application areas and take an active role in establishing communication between the employees and trainee students.

Again, within the scope of theme 2, it was observed that the health personnel working in the internship institutions did not comply with the aseptic techniques during the practice. Similarly, it was emphasized in the studies of Yenil and Çelikli (2013) that hospital employees exhibit unprofessional approaches in practices and this situation negatively affects students' professional gains. The unprofessional behavior of the staff in practice negatively affects the professional future of the students. In this context, it is recommended that the accompanying internship supervisors identify the existence of this situation in advance, have the students perform the right practices in the school laboratory, train on potential errors in the internship areas and share this situation with the relevant people in the internship institutions.

Among the problems mentioned in Theme 3, other problems include not being able to benefit from the dining hall service and not getting sufficient financial benefits from internships. In a study conducted with 55 senior students studying in the Paramedic Program, it was stated that similar to our research, students were not able to get food service in the health institution (Yenil-Çelikli, 2013). In another study with 192 students, 19% of the students stated that they were not given food by the internship institution (Hançer Aydemir, 2016). Failure to provide food to students in internship institutions causes students to move away from the internship area and to experience both economic and physical performance loss. We think that it will be beneficial to contact the relevant institutions before the practice in order to overcome these problems.

Recommendations

In the elimination of the problems faced by students who study in the First and Emergency Aid Program (FEAP) in hospital internship practices, it is recommended that

- MYOs and SHMYOs are established in regions that are dense in terms of internship area
- These schools, which are currently providing education, open programs according to the application intensity of their region
- In order to ensure active participation of students in internship practices, the quotas of the students are determined by considering the numbers that the institutions will accept.

References

- Aydın, M. F. & Argun, M. Ş. (2010). The expectations of hospital practices and faced problems of the students in Bitlis Eren University, health school, department of nursing. *Acibadem University Health Sciences Journal*, 1(4), 209-213
- Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç, Çakmak, E., Akgün, Ö.E., Karadeniz, Ş. & Demirel, F. (2014). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri* (17. Baskı). Ankara, Pegem Akademi
- Çelikli, S. (2016a). From its establishment till today, standardization efforts and breaking points in the paramedic education. *Journal of Pre-Hospital*, 1(2), 39-54
- Çelikli, S. (2016b). Türkiye’de ilk paramedik okulunun kuruluşu ve yaygınlaşması. *Türkiye Klinikleri J Emerg Med-Special Topics*, 2(3), 25-31
- Çevik, N. (2016). Vocational Schools of Health Services, the Main Goals and the Establishment of First and Emergency Aid (Paramedic) Programme. *Türkiye Klinikleri J Emerg Med-Special Topics*, 2(3), 12-24.
- Demirağ, H. & Hintistan, S. (2019). Investigation of the views of the first and emergency aid program students about summer internship. *Ordu University Journal of Nursing Studies* 2 (1), 45-54.
- Göllüce, A., Avan, H. & Karsu, F. (2017). From the standpoint of students: paramedics as a profession. *Journal of Pre-Hospital*, 2(1), 1-9.
- Hançer Aydemir, D. (2016). The views of vocational high school students on summer internship: the example of health services. *Turkish Journal of Life Sciences*, 1(1), 34-42
- Karadağ, G., Parlar Kılıç, S., Ovayolu, N., Ovayolu, Ö. & Kayaaslan, H. (2013). Difficulties encountered by nursing students in practices and their views about nurses. *TAF Preventive Medicine Bulletin*, 12(6), 665-672
- Kostak, A., M., Aras, T. & Akarsu, T., (2012). Hemşirelik öğrencilerinin klinik hemşirelerin eğitimlerine verdiği katkıya ilişkin görüşleri. *Cumhuriyet Hemşirelik Dergisi*, 2012; 2:39-46
- Öztürk, Y. & Kırac, R. (2019). A research on the determination of the opinions of the students of health management about internship education. *International Anatolia Academic Online Journal Social Sciences Journal*, 5 (1), 14-29. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/iaaoj/issue/41028/457217>
- Polat, Ş., Erkan, H. A., Çınar, G. & Doğrusöz, L. A. (2018). Opinions of student nurses practicing in clinics of a university hospital about their fields of application. *Journal of Health and Nursing Management*, 5(2), 64-74.
- Sağlık Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü (SHGM), (2014). 2023 yılı sağlık iş gücü hedefleri ve sağlık eğitimi,

<http://dosyasb.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/2912,2023saglikegitimbaski-webpdf.pdf> adresinden 13.07.2020 tarihinde ulařılmıştır.

SİY (2019). Sağlık İstatistikleri Yıllığı 2018, <https://dosyamerkez.saglik.gov.tr/Eklenti/36134,siy2018trpdf.pdf?0> adresinden 25.07.2020 tarihinde ulařılmıştır.

Tuygar, Ş.F. (2016). Paramedik Programı Öğrencilerinin Yaz Stajı Hakkındaki Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi. Düzce Üniversitesi Sağlık Bilimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi (Journal of Duzce University Health Sciences Institute), 6(2), 92-100

Ünlüođlu, İ., Ekşi, A. & Anık, N. (2002). Yeni bir sağlık meslek grubu; paramedikler. STED, 11(4), 308.

Yazıcıođlu, S. (2016) Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu öğrencilerinin uygulama ve staj sorunları, Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulları'nda uygulanan programların güncellenmesi ve eğitim standartlarının belirlenmesi çalıştayı bildiri kitapçığı, 101-102.

Yenal, S. & Çelikli, S. (2013). İlk ve Acil Yardım Programı son sınıf öğrencilerinin klinik uygulamalarda ve ambulans istasyonlarında karşılaştıkları güçlükler. Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu Dergisi, 4(2), 10-18.

YÖK (2016). Yüksek Öğretim Program Atlası, <https://yokatlas.yok.gov.tr/>, (Eriřim Tarihi; 07.07.2017).

YÖK (2020). Yüksek Öğretim Program Atlası, <https://yokatlas.yok.gov.tr/>, (Eriřim Tarihi;27.03.2020).