

The relationship between self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children in pediatric nurses and pediatricians (The case of Sivas province)

Pediatric hemşireleri ve hekimlerinin benlik saygılarının ve empati becerilerinin çocuk sevme ile ilişkisi (Sivas ili örneği)

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SUMMARY


Objective: There is an important relationship between positive self-esteem, developed empathy skills and liking of children in nurses and physicians. This descriptive study aims to evaluate the relationship between self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children in pediatric nurses and pediatricians.


Method: This descriptive and cross-sectional study was conducted with 105 nurses and 46 pediatricians working in private, state and university hospitals. Data were collected using a "Personal Information Form", the "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (RSES), the "Empathy Skill Scale-B Form" (ESS) and the "Barnett Liking of Children Scale" (BLOCS), and analyzed using SPSS version 22 program via One-way Anova, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis and Pearson's chi-square tests.

Results: In this study, the RSES, BLOCS and ESS mean scores were 32.82±5.18, 85.74±9.08 and 145.79±28.15 for pediatric nurses and 32.41±5.17, 85.28±9.70 and 136.22±22.24 for pediatricians, respectively.

Conclusions: There was no direct relationship between self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children in pediatric nurses and pediatricians ($p>0.05$), however a statistically significant positive correlation was found between their self-esteem and empathy skills and between their empathy skills and liking of children ($p<0.05$).

Keywords: Pediatric nurses and pediatricians, self-esteem, empathy skills, liking of children

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ÖZET

Amaç: Hemşire ve hekimlerdeki olumlu benlik saygısı, gelişmiş empati becerisi ve çocuk sevme arasında önemli bir ilişki vardır. Tanımlayıcı olarak planlanan bu çalışmada, pediatri hemşire ve hekimlerinin benlik saygılarının ve empati becerilerinin çocuk sevme ile ilişkisinin değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Yöntem: Araştırma, özel, devlet ve üniversite hastanelerinde çalışan 105 hemşire, 46 hekim ile yürütülmüştür. Veriler 'Kişisel Bilgi Formu', 'Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği' (RBSÖ), 'Empati Beceri Ölçeği-B Formu' (EBÖ) ve 'Barnett Çocuk Sevme Ölçeği' (BÇSÖ) kullanılarak toplanmış, SPSS version 22 programında One-way, Anova, Mann Whitney U, Kruskal Wallis ve Pearson chisquare testleri ile analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular ve Sonuç: Bu araştırmada hemşirelerin benlik saygısı toplam puan ortalamasının 32.82 ± 5.18 , hekimlerin 32.41 ± 5.17 , hemşirelerin çocuk sevme puan ortalamasının 85.74 ± 9.08 , hekimlerin 85.28 ± 9.70 ve hemşirelerin EBÖ puan ortalamasının 145.79 ± 28.15 , hekimlerin 136.22 ± 22.24 olduğu belirlenmiştir. Pediatri hemşire ve hekimlerinin benlik saygısı ve empati becerileri ile çocuk sevme arasında doğrudan bir ilişki bulunmazken ($p > 0.05$), benlik saygısı ile empati becerisi ve empati becerisi ile çocuk sevme arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı pozitif bir ilişki bulunmuştur ($p < 0.05$).

Anahtar sözcükler: Pediatri hemşire ve hekimleri, benlik saygısı, empati becerisi, çocuk sevme

INTRODUCTION

In pediatric wards, nurses and pediatricians treat stressful children with limited life experiences and inadequate mental development and verbal skills^{1, 2, 3}. Both personal and professional characteristics of pediatric nurses and pediatricians are of great importance during hospitalization of children.

Self-esteem refers to a person's ability to self-evaluate, cope with difficulties and achieve self-evaluation based goals. Self-esteem affects the relationship between professional roles and professional satisfaction as well as the relationship between professional performance and professional role conflict^{4, 5}. A profession in harmony with the ego structure strengthens individual self, whereas a profession incompatible with the ego structure can cause significant problems, increasing the possibility of experiencing conflict and dissatisfaction. A positive self-esteem enables nurses to establish healthy interpersonal relationships and gain an ability to collaborate with patients and colleagues. Self-esteem can be regarded as a prerequisite for professional compliance and satisfaction, as well as how important and valuable the profession to nurses and physicians is⁶. Pediatric nurses and pediatricians with positive self-esteem allows pediatric patients to cope more effectively with stress and build self-confidence⁷.

Similarly, a positive communication between patients and health professionals requires empathic sensitivity of physicians and nurses. Empathy, a complex and multidimensional concept with moral, cognitive, emotional and behavioral components, is an important component of nurse-patient relations and nursing care practices^{8, 9}. Empathy is an important component not only in pediatric care but also in the relationship between health professionals¹⁰. Pediatric nurses, who keep a very close relationship with children especially during pediatric care process, should have empathic communication skills to better understand pediatric patients¹¹. Nurses' empathic approach helps children to feel cared and understood^{11, 12, 13}. In addition, children who are treated by healthcare professionals with empathic behaviors have less anxiety, better self-concept, and lower depression

and hostility. Empathic behaviors also have positive effects in healthcare workers, allowing them to be aware of their own feelings and experience less mental stress and job burnout^{14, 15}. Moreover, the higher the empathic abilities of nurses, the higher the patient satisfaction and treatment compliance. Empathy is the basic component of physician-patient relationship. If physicians approach patients with an empathetic attitude, they can obtain more information about their health condition, determine their needs more accurately and achieve positive results. Therefore, empathy is also very important for correct diagnosis and effective treatment¹⁶.

For children who are exposed to many external threats and adverse events during their long childhood, hospitalization may mean a decrease in storge/familial love and companionship due to partially or completely staying away from their most important sources of love, family and friends. It is an important need for children to be treated with tenderness and affection by nurses and physicians in cases of illness where they need liking and attention at most. An affectionate approach of healthcare professionals makes children feel safe in stressful hospital environment, accelerating their recovery process. Therefore, liking of children is very important for healthcare team members who deal with and treat pediatric patients^{17, 18, 19}.

One of the most important factors in deciding to become a pediatric nurse is undoubtedly to like children and respect their rights²⁰. Nurses and physicians with positive self-esteem and empathy skills should like and devote close attention to children to understand their physical, intellectual, emotional, social and developmental differences and protect them. Nurses and physicians who like children are considered to better understand feelings and needs of children and exhibit more attentive behaviors while talking to and listening to them. Nurses and physicians who like children are also considered health professionals who show more respect to child rights²¹.

Although there are many studies about self-esteem and empathy especially in nurses, there is no study that directly addresses the relationship between

self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children in nurses and physicians. Studies on nurses' liking of children are new and limited in Turkey, therefore this study will make a significant contribution to the literature by revealing the relationship between self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children in pediatric nurses and pediatricians.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this study, the questions of whether there is a relationship between self-esteem and empathy skills of nurses and physicians and liking children, and how sociodemographic and professional characteristics affect self-esteem, empathy skills and child loving were sought. The population of the study included a total of 140 pediatric nurses and 55 pediatricians, including 52 nurses-28 physicians in Sivas Cumhuriyet University Research and Training Hospital, 73 nurses-23 physicians in Sivas Public Hospital and 15 nurses-4 physicians in Sivas Private Medicana Hospital. The data of the study were collected between July 1, 2016 and February 1, 2017 through questionnaires applied to pediatric nurses and physicians. The researchers aimed to reach the entire population, so did not use any sample calculation and selection method. However, a total of 9 health professionals were excluded from the study because one filled out the forms incompletely and eight marked two or more unrelated sentences on the empathy scale. Therefore, the sample of the study consisted of 105 nurses and 46 physicians who were reached at the time of the study and agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected via face-to-face interviews by using a "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers in line with the literature, the "Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale" (RSES), the "Empathy Skill Scale-B Form" (ESS) and the "Barnett Liking of Children Scale" (BLOCS).

Personal Information Form: The form includes questions to determine the personal and professional characteristics of pediatric nurses and pediatricians such as age, marital status, education level and work experience.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale: The scale was developed by Rosenberg (1963) and adapted to Turkish by Çuhadaroglu (1986). This a self-report scale with 63 multiple-choice items and twelve subscales. Only the first subscale measuring self-esteem was used in this study. It consists of 10 items in total, using a 4-point Likert-type scoring options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly

disagree). Items 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 are positive, while items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 are negative, where "strongly agree" is scored as 4 and "strongly disagree" as 1 for positive items and vice-versa for negative items. The lowest score one can get from the RSES is 10, while the highest is 40²². The reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.75, and the internal consistency coefficient is 0.82. In our study, the cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.882.

Empathy Skill Scale-B Form: The scale was developed by Dökmen (1988), and consists of two forms as 'A' and 'B'. The ESS-B form is based on six different problems encountered in daily life. Each problem is followed by 12 empathic responses of one sentence that can be addressed to a person suffering from it. One of the 12 responses is irrelevant to the problem. Individuals who chose a total of 24 empathic responses from four out of six problems on the scale obtain a score corresponding to each response they chose, which is graded in accordance with the criteria included in the ESS-A form. The lowest score one can get from the ESS is 62, while the highest is 219²³.

Barnett Liking of Children Scale: This is a self-report scale developed by Barnett and Sinisi (1990) to measure people's attitudes towards children. Its Turkish reliability and validity studies were performed by Gelbal and Duyan (2008). This is a 7-point Likert type scale with 14 items, scoring from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". Four items have negative meaning (3, 6, 10 and 13) and others have positive meaning, where "strongly agree" is scored as 7 and "strongly disagree" as 1 for positive items and vice-versa for negative items. The lowest score one can get from the BLOCS is 14, while the highest is 98^{24,25}. In our study, the cronbach alpha value of the scale was found to be 0.846.

Ethical Considerations: Each stage of the research was conducted in accordance with ethical principles. Before the application, permission was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Cumhuriyet University Faculty of Medicine (with the decision number 2016-06 / 19, dated 21.06.2016). From Sivas Province Public Hospitals Association (dated 02.08.2016; number: 75723911-044 from Cumhuriyet University Application and Research Hospital (dated 02.11.2016; number: 93596471-044) and Medicana Hospital (dated 15.12.2016; number: 2016/3886) the research was initiated. In addition, the nurses and physicians in the research population were informed about the purpose of the research and the data collection questionnaire. Physicians and nurses participating in the study

were enlightened with the Informed Consent Form and their participation was ensured.

Evaluation of Data

Statistical analysis of the collected data was performed using the SPSS version 22 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) program. While evaluating the study data, descriptive statistical criteria (Average, Standard Deviation, Median, Frequency, Ratio, Minimum, Maximum) as well as the Student-T test and the Oneway Anova test for the comparison of normally distributed parameters in the comparison of quantitative data, and the Mann Whitney U test for the comparison of non-normally distributed parameters. and Kruskal Wallis test were used. Chi-square test was used to compare qualitative data. In the study, $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

RESULTS

The results of the study were assessed using the distribution of total scale scores with respect to some variables related to personal (age, gender, education, marital status and number of children) and work life (institution, work experience, work schedule and weekly working hours) of pediatric nurses and pediatricians.

In the sample, 29.5% of the pediatric nurses were 18-25 years old, 34.8% of the pediatricians were 26-30 years old; 89.5% of the pediatric nurses and 60.9% of the pediatricians were female; 56.2% of the pediatric nurses and 100% of the pediatricians had bachelor's degree. In addition, 58.1% of the pediatric nurses and 58.7% of the pediatricians were married; and 51.4% of the pediatric nurses and 54.3% of the pediatricians had children. Moreover, 37.1% of the pediatric nurses had work experience over 10 years, 81.9% worked in shifts, and 35.2% worked 40-48 hours per week; while 41.3% of the pediatricians had work experience over 10 years, 69.4% worked in shifts and 76.1% worked more than 48 hours per week (Table 1).

The RSES total mean score was 32.82 ± 5.18 for pediatric nurses and 32.41 ± 5.17 for pediatricians, and there was no statistically significant difference between their mean scores ($p > 0.05$). The BLOCS mean score was 85.74 ± 9.08 for pediatric nurses and 85.28 ± 9.70 for pediatricians, and there was no statistically significant difference between their mean scores ($p > 0.05$). The ESS mean score was 145.79 ± 28.15 for pediatric nurses and 136.22 ± 22.24 for pediatricians, and the difference between their mean scores was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) (Table 2).

The difference between the pediatric nurses' self-esteem mean scores with respect to age ($p = 0.022$) and education level ($p = 0.012$) was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the pediatricians' self-esteem mean scores according to these variables ($p > 0.05$) (Table 3).

The difference between the pediatric nurses' empathy skills mean scores with respect to age ($p = 0.002$), education level ($p = 0.000$), marital status ($p = 0.001$) and status of having children ($p = 0.017$) was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the pediatricians' empathy skills mean scores according to these variables ($p > 0.05$).

The difference between the pediatricians' liking of children mean scores with respect to status of having children ($p = 0.021$) was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), however, there was no statistically significant difference between their mean scores according to other variables ($p > 0.05$).

No statistically significant difference was found between the RSES, ESS and BLOCS mean scores of pediatric nurses and pediatricians according to work experience ($p > 0.05$) (Table 4).

Table 1: Personal and Professional Characteristics of Pediatric Nurses and Physicians

(n = 151)

Introductory Features		Nurse (n=105)		Physician (n=46)	
		S	%	S	%
Age	18-25	31	29.5	3	6.5
	26-30	25	23.8	16	34.8
	31-35	20	19	7	15.2
	36-40	21	20	11	23.9
	41 and over	8	7.7	9	19.6
Gender	Female	94	89.5	28	60.9
	Male	11	10.5	18	39.1
Education Status	High school	10	9.5		
	Associate degree	30	28.6		
	License	59	56.2		
	Graduate	6	5.7	46	100
Marital Status	Married	61	58.1	27	58.7
	Single	44	41.9	19	41.3
Have a Child	Yes	54	51.4	25	54.3
	No	51	48.6	21	45.7
Working Year	0-1 year	8	7.6	11	23.9
	2-4 year	30	28.6	7	15.2
	5-9 year	28	26.7	9	19.6
	10 year and over	39	37.1	19	41.3
Way of Working	Day	19	18.1	15	30.6
	Shift	86	81.9		
	Day+ Shift			31	69.4
Weekly Working Hours	40 hours	37	35.2	6	13
	41-48 hours	37	35.2	5	10.9
	48 hours and over	31	29.6	35	76.1

Table 2: Self-Esteem, Empathy Skills and Child Loving Scale Scores of Pediatric Nurses and Physicians

	RBSÖ			EBÖ			BÇSÖ		
	$\bar{x} \pm s.s$	min-max	p	$\bar{x} \pm s.s$	min-max	p	$\bar{x} \pm s.s$	min-max	p
Nurse (n=105)	32.82± 5.18	12.00- 40.00	.658	145.79± 28.15	93.00- 208.00	.043	85.74± 9.08	60.00- 98.00	.779
Physician (n=46)	32.41± 5.17	16.00- 40.00		136.22± 22.24	96.00- 197.00		85.28± 9.70	45.00- 98.00	

Table 3: Some Personal Characteristics of Pediatric Nurses and Physicians. and Self-Esteem. Empathy Skills and Child Liking Scores

Introductory Features		RBSÖ		EBÖ		BÇSÖ	
		test	p	test	p	test	p
Age*	Nurse	11.49	0.022	17.17	0.002	5.63	0.228
	Physician	3.80	0.433	7.75	0.101	5.64	0.227
Gender**	Nurse	391.00	0.186	354.00	0.089	516.00	0.992
	Physician	239.00	0.769	191.50	0.173	250.00	0.964
Education Status*	Nurse	10.92	0.012	21.98	0.000	2.52	0.471
Marital Status**	Nurse	1074.00	0.164	797.00	0.001	1154.5	0.395
	Physician	212.50	0.681	216.00	0.745	188.50	0.322
Have a Child**	Nurse	1315.50	0.693	1006.00	0.017	1243.00	0.390
	Physician	211.50	0.259	233.50	0.522	158.50	0.021

*Kruskal Wallis Analizi. **Mann Whithney U Analizi

Table 4: Some Occupational Characteristics of Pediatric Nurses and Physicians. and Self-Esteem. Empathy Skills and Child Liking Scores

Features		RBSÖ		EBÖ		BÇSÖ	
		test	p	test	p	test	p
Working Year *	Nurse	6.858	0.077	7.540	0.057	0.188	0.98
	Physician	2.414	0.491	2.228	0.526	6.626	0.085
Mode of Operation **	Nurse	526.00	0.084	416.00	0.008	640.50	0.499
	Physician	98.50	0.145	139.50	0.507	88.00	0.149
Weekly Working Hours *	Nurse	2.107	0.349	14.767	0.001	4.191	0.123
	Physician	7.098	0.069	4.501	0.212	2.840	0.417

*Kruskal Wallis Analizi. **Mann Whithney U Analizi

While there was no significant difference between the pediatric nurses' RSES and BLOCS mean scores according to work schedule, but a statistically significant difference was found between their ESS mean scores ($p=0.008$) ($p>0.05$). The Mann Whitney U test revealed that the difference was due to the nurses with day shift, where their ESS mean score (166.89 ± 31.66) was significantly higher than that of those with rotating shift (141.53 ± 25.57). There was also no statistically significant difference between the pediatricians' RSES, ESS and BLOCS mean scores according to work schedule ($p>0.05$).

In addition, no statistically significant difference was determined between the pediatric nurses' RSES and BLOCS mean scores according to

weekly working hours ($p>0.05$), but a statistically significant difference was found between their ESS mean scores ($p=0.001$). The difference was due to those who worked more than 40 hours a week. No statistically significant difference was found between the pediatricians' RSES, ESS and BLOCS scores according to weekly working hours ($p>0.05$).

The relationship between self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children among pediatric nurses and pediatricians was not statistically significant ($p>0.05$), but a statistically significant positive weak correlation was found between their self-esteem and empathy skills ($p<0.05$) and between their empathy skills and liking of children ($p<0.05$) (Table 5).

Table 5: The Relationship Between Child Loving, Self-Esteem and Empathy Skills in Pediatric Nurses and Physicians

		RBSÖ*	EBÖ*	BÇSÖ*
RBSÖ*	r	1	.297**	.151
	p		.000	.065
EBÖ*	r	.297**	1	.184*
	p	.000		.024
BÇSÖ*	r	.151	.184*	1
	p	.065	.024	

DISCUSSION

Pediatric nursing and medical profession is based on positive self-esteem, empathy and liking of children. Liking of children allows nurses and physicians, who have positive self-esteem and developed empathy skills, to accept children easily, enjoy spending time with them and be more careful and attentive when communicating with them. In this study, the RSES mean score was 32.82±5.18 (min-max: 12-40) for pediatric nurses and 32.41±5.17 (min-max: 16-40) for pediatricians. In the literature, the self-esteem mean scores of nurses and physicians were high and close to those in the present study (Table 5) ^{22,7,26,27}.

The ESS mean score was 145.79±28.15 (min-max: 93-208) for pediatric nurses and 136.22±22.24 (min-max: 96-197) for pediatricians, suggesting a moderate level of empathic tendency in both groups (Table 5). These results are similar to those in the literature ^{28,29,11,30}. Pediatric nurses had higher ESS mean score than pediatricians, which is supported by Şen et al. (2012) ³¹.

The BLOCS mean score was 85.74±9.08 (min-max: 60-98) for pediatric nurses and 85.28±9.70 (min-max: 45-98) for pediatricians, suggesting a high level of child-liking in both groups (Table 5). In the literature, there is no study about the liking of children in pediatricians. However, studies have reported high BLOCS mean scores for nurses, similar to those in the present study ^{32,33,34,35}.

Discussion According to Personal Characteristics of Pediatric Nurses and Pediatricians

Personal characteristics such as age, gender, education level, marital status, and status of having children can affect self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children. A statistically significant difference was found between the pediatric nurses' age, self-esteem and empathy (Table 2).

Although there are studies arguing that there is no significant relationship between age and self-esteem ³⁶, there are also studies showing that self-esteem increases by age and there is a significant relationship between them ^{7,37}.

Şahin and Özdemir (2015) found that empathy skills increased by age ³⁸. Şen et al. (2012) determined that empathy was higher in healthcare workers aged 36-45 years ³¹. Teke et al. (2010) conducted a study with 480 physicians and found that as age increased, empathy level decreased ⁴⁰. There are also studies reporting that there is no significant relationship between age and empathy skills ^{11,28,29,30,39,40,41}.

There are studies with results similar to those in the present study regarding the relationship between age and liking of children ^{32,33,34,35}. Aşçı et al. (2017) found a significant relationship between the nursing students' age and BLOCS score averages ⁴².

The present study found no significant relationship between gender, self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, Çakmak et al. (2015) ²⁶, Kılınç et al. (2016) ⁴³, Öz et al. (2009) ³⁶ and Torun et al. (2012) ⁴⁴ found no significant relationship between self-esteem and gender, whereas Saygılı et al. (2015) ³⁷ and Türksoy (2014) found that women had higher self-esteem than men ⁴⁵.

Gender is frequently used as a variable in both qualitative and quantitative empathy studies. In this context, national and foreign studies report differences in empathy levels of women and men. Kutlu and Turgut (2018), Coşkun (2011), Hatipoğlu (2013), Hojat et al. (2005), Keskin (2010), Sherman and Cramer (2005), and Teke et al. (2010) found that women had more empathy characteristics than men ^{16,28,39,40,41,46,47}. However, similar to this study, there are also studies that do not find a significant relationship between gender and empathy ^{30,48,49,50}.

Similar to the present study, Aşçı et al. (2017)⁴² and Bektaş et al. (2015)¹⁸ found no significant relationship between gender and liking of children, whereas Barnett and Sinisi (1990) and Güven, Kaya, Dalgıç (2016) found a significant relationship between them^{24,51}.

As educational level increases, self-esteem increases, making the person adopt an empathic behavior model. This study found no significant relationship between education level and liking of children, but determined a significant relationship between education level, self-esteem and empathy. Similarly, Saygılı et al. (2015)³⁷ and Kutanisa and Tunç (2013)⁵² found that as education level increased, self-esteem increased. Altınoluk (2014)⁵³, Coşkun (2011)²⁸, Şahin and Özdemir (2012)³⁸ and Şen et al. (2012)³¹ also determined that the higher the education level, the higher the empathy skill scale scores of the nurses. However, there are also studies suggesting no significant relationship between education level and empathy skill^{11,29}. Studies argue that empathy training can be beneficial for almost everyone, especially those working in certain fields such as medicine and nursing²³. As in this study, Büyük et al. (2014)³², Erdem and Duyan (2011)³³ and Kara (2014)³⁵ found no statistically significant relationship between education level and liking of children.

In the present study, there was no statistically significant difference between the pediatric nurses' self-esteem and liking of children according to their marital status and status of having children, but a statistically significant difference was observed between their empathy skills and liking of children with respect to these variables. In addition, a statistically significant difference was found between the pediatricians' liking of children mean scores in terms of status of having children, but there was no significant difference between their BLOCS mean scores according to other variables. One nursing study has reported that single nurses have significantly higher self-esteem than married ones and those without children⁵². Similar to the present study, one study found no significant relationship between marital status and self-esteem⁵⁴.

Kaya (2011)²⁹, Özcan (2012)¹¹, Özdemir (2015)³⁰, Özdemir et al. (2015)⁵⁰, and Sherman & Cramer (2005)⁴¹ found no statistically significant relationship between marital status and empathy skills, while Altınoluk (2014) determined a significant relationship between them⁵³.

Kara (2014) has reported that there is no statistically significant relationship between the marital status, status of having children, and liking

of children in nurses³⁵. Büyük et al. (2014) has concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between the status of having children and liking of children among nurses³². Erdem, Duyan (2011) determined no statistically significant relationship between liking of children, status of having children and marital status³³. Barnett and Sinisi (1990) found that BLOCS scores were associated with status of having children²⁴.

Discussion According to Professional Characteristics of Pediatric Nurses and Pediatricians

This study found a statistically significant difference between the pediatric nurses' empathy skills according to work schedule and weekly working hours, but determined no statistically significant relationship between the pediatricians' professional characteristics, self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children (Table 3).

This study also found no statistically significant difference between the self-esteem, empathy skills and liking of children mean scores of pediatric nurses and pediatricians according to work experience. Kutanis and Tunç (2013) contradicts these results⁵².

Teke (2010)⁴⁷ and Altınoluk (2014)⁵³ found that as work experience increased, the empathy skills mean score decreased. Coşkun (2011)²⁸, İşçen (2006)⁵⁵, Kaya (2011)²⁹, Özcan (2012)¹¹, Özdemir (2015)³⁰, Özdemir et al. (2015)⁵⁰ and Şahin, Özdemir (2015)³⁸ reported results similar to those in the present study.

Kostak et al. (2017)³⁴, Erdem, Duyan (2011)³³, and Kara (2014)³⁵ argued that the relationship between work experience and liking of children was statistically insignificant, which is similar to the result in the present study.

This study determined a statistically significant difference between the pediatric nurses' empathy skills according to work schedule, but found no statistically significant difference between their self-esteem and liking of children with respect to this variable. This may be because pediatric nurses and pediatricians working in shifts are exposed to intense work pressure for long hours, suffer insomnia, and have heavy work load.

Similar to this study, Erbil and Bostan (2004) found no significant relationship between work schedule and self-esteem⁵⁶.

İşçen (2006)⁵⁵, Özdemir (2015)³⁰, and Özdemir et al. (2015)⁵⁰ found no statistically significant relationship between work schedule and empathy skills, which contradicts the result of the present study.

Similar to this study, Kara (2014) determined no statistically significant relationship between liking of children and work schedule³⁵.

The present study found a statistically significant relationship between weekly working hours and empathy in pediatric nurses. As working hours increase, nurses' self-esteem and empathy skills decrease due to sleep disorder, exposure to physical and mental fatigue, and negative effects on physiological and social life.

İşçen (2006)⁵⁵ and Özdemir et al. (2015)⁵⁰ found no statistically significant relationship between weekly working hours and empathy skills. Similar to the present study, Şahin, Özdemir (2015)³⁸ found that as weekly working time increased, empathy skills decreased, where there was a statistically significant relationship between them.

Contrary to the present study, Kara (2014)³⁵ found a statistically significant relationship between liking of children and weekly working hours among nurses, where those who worked 40-48 hours a week had significantly higher BLOCS total mean score than those who worked 48 hours or more.

Limitations

The study was planned to be conducted with all pediatric doctors and nurses of three different hospitals in the city center, but It was conducted with the participation of 105 nurses and 46 doctors. The fact that the study was conducted in a small group limited the generalizability of the results.

CONCLUSION AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study; While there was a statistically significant weakly positive correlation between RSAS and EBÖ scores of pediatric nurses and physicians ($p < 0.05$), the relationship between RSI and CSSS was not statistically significant. ($p > 0.05$). A statistically significant, very weakly positive correlation was found between the EBÖ and BCSS scores of nurses and physicians.

Liking of children has a special and very important place in the knowledge, skills and values of pediatricians and pediatric nurses. According to these results;

Nurses and physicians who really want to work in children's medical services and like children should be employed in these services.

Various opportunities should be created to support the professional motivation of nurses and physicians and their positive qualities towards children.

Vocational and professional guidelines should be prepared to eliminate the differences between nurses and physicians in terms of the liking of children level.

Nurses and physicians are recommended to read children's books, follow news, institutions and organizations regarding children, and learn children's games in order to better understand children's world and support and develop their positive qualities.

Further studies can be conducted using different variables that are considered to affect the liking of children levels in nurses and physicians.

Anger is a controllable emotion, empathy skill is a phenomenon that can be developed with education, and it is quite are two important concepts. For this reason, it is recommended to give more importance to anger control and empathy training in nursing education.

In addition, it may be suggested to generalize the study by doing it in larger groups.

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