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ASSESSMENT OF SELF CARE PRACTICES AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

Background: *Self-care practices is crucial for personal health, providing the necessary sustenance to care for others, and fostering professional development. Although various factors influence an individual's health status and self-care practices, these practices are fundamental in enhancing the prevention of illness and injury, as well as promoting health. Effective self-care practices are vital for alleviating negative impacts and enhancing overall wellbeing.*

Purpose: *This study aimed to evaluate the level of self-care practices among undergraduate nursing students.*

Methodology: *A cross-sectional study design was employed. The sample size was determined using open EPI software, comprising 170 undergraduate nursing students. Data collection was conducted through a validated questionnaire. The research was carried out at a private nursing college in Karachi, Pakistan. Data entry and analysis were performed using SPSS 27.*

Result: *The findings of this study revealed that the overall level of self-care practices among undergraduate nursing students was commendable, with 96% of participants demonstrating good self-care practices. The results indicated that a majority of nursing students actively engage in effective self-care practices. However, a notable disparity was observed, with hostel students reporting a higher satisfaction level of 64%, compared to 32% among day scholars. This suggests that hostel students benefit from greater opportunities for social support and shared self-care activities, leading to increased satisfaction.*

Conclusion: *The findings of this study underscore the significance of self-care practices among nursing students. While a majority of students expressed high satisfaction with their self-care practices, it is essential to address the concerns of home students and to investigate strategies aimed at enhancing their self-care practices.*

INTRODUCTION

Self-care, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), refers to the ability of individuals to promote and maintain health, prevent disease, and cope with illness with or without the support of a healthcare provide(Kong et al., 2024). For nursing students, self-care is not only an individual responsibility but also a professional obligation (Burner & Spadaro, 2023). As future healthcare providers, nursing students

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must learn to practice self-care to serve as role models for their patients and ensure their own well-being to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue, common issues in the nursing profession(Durán-Gómez et al., 2023).

Nursing students often face high levels of stress due to the demands of their academic and clinical training, leading to neglect of self-care practices. This neglect can result in burnout, poor mental and physical health, and reduced academic performance, ultimately affecting the quality of care they provide to patients(Fairchild & Tully, 2025). Despite the critical importance of self-care in the nursing profession, there is limited research assessing the self-care behaviors of undergraduate nursing students(Gancheva & Smith-Peters, 2022). Understanding the factors that contribute to inadequate self-care practices is essential for developing interventions that support student well-being and promote a healthier, more resilient nursing workforce(Hartweg & Metcalfe, 2022).

The academic and clinical training environment in nursing programs can be both physically and mentally demanding, leading to increased stress, fatigue, and mental health problems for students(Kong et al., 2024). Numerous studies have shown that nursing students often neglect self-care due to lack of time, heavy workload, and the need to balance academic and personal life. This neglect can have negative consequences such as burnout, decreased academic performance, and decreased quality of care during clinical placements(Muhlare & Downing, 2023).

Understanding undergraduate nursing students' self-care practices is critical to shaping interventions that support their health. By identifying factors that influence self-care behaviors, such as course load, social support, mental health awareness, and institutional resources, educators and administrators can develop programs that promote better self-care habits(Udoudo et al., 2023). This study contributes to the growing literature on nursing student well-being and provides insight into how to promote a culture of self-care within nursing education. The results of this study have implications for improving the quality of both nursing education and the care provided by future nurses(Williams et al., 2022). The purpose of this study was to assess nursing students' self-care practices and identify gaps. The importance of this study lies in the potential to improve the well-being of nursing students by identifying the current state of their self-care practices and the factors that influence them(Udoudo et al., 2023). Understanding these practices is important to prevent burnout, stress, and mental health issues that are common among nursing students due to their demanding academic and clinical responsibilities. By assessing self-care behaviors, this study provides teachers and administrators with valuable information to develop interventions that promote healthier lifestyles, improved academic performance, and greater resilience in students. Ultimately, this research could lead to better-prepared, healthier nurses who are more capable of providing high-quality patient care.

Methodology

This study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to assess the self-care practices among undergraduate nursing students. A sample size of around 200 undergraduate nursing students was targeted. This number is based on statistical power analysis, which aims for a 95% confidence level and 80% power to detect meaningful relationships or differences in self-care practices. The study's population consisted of nursing students enrolled in any registered program at the Advanced Health Sciences Private Nursing Institute. The study's inclusion criteria were nursing students who are currently enrolled in academic programs and willing to participate in the study. Nursing students on clinical duty or on leave were omitted from this study. This approach ensures that the findings reflect a wide range of experiences and perspectives within the student population. Permission was taken from Principal of the private nursing institute. After taking the permission, participants were selected through non probability connivance sampling methods, purpose, risk benefits and objective of study were explained to participants. Consent form was obtained from the study participants. An assessment tool used to assess nurses' self-care

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practice of undergraduate nursing students. The study instrument comprised two components demographic components and 2nd portion composed of question regarding self-care practice**.** Each question have each necessary item was evaluated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4 as follows: 4 = Often 3 = Intermittently 2 = Infrequently 1 =Never.

The data was inputted and processed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviations were employed for analysis.

Result.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Out of the 200 participants, 94 (46.8%) were aged 20–22 years, representing the largest age group, followed by 83 (41.3%) respondents aged 17–19 years and 23 (11.4%) respondents aged 23–25 years. With regard to gender, the majority of respondents were male, accounting for 184 (92.0%) participants, while females comprised 15 (8.0%) participants. These findings indicate that most respondents were between 20 and 22 years of age and that the study population was predominantly male. The distribution of respondents according to their year of study. Of the 200 participants included in the study, 126 (63.0%) were in the second year, making it the largest group. A further 59 respondents (29.5%) were in the third year, while only 15 respondents (7.5%) were in the first year. The results suggest that the sample was primarily composed of second-year students, with relatively fewer participants from the first and third years.

Table # 1 Demographic Data

Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
17-19	83	41.3
20-22	94	46.8
23-25	23	11.4
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	184	92.0
Female	15	8.0
Total	200	100.0

Years	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
3rd year	59	29.5
2nd year	126	63.0
1st Year	15	7.5
Total	200	100.0
Residence	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Hostelized	100	50%
Day scholar	100	50%

Table # 2 Self-care Practice level

self-care practice	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Good self-care practice	129	64.5
Poor self-care practice	71	35.5
Total	200	100

The study findings presented in Table II indicate that the majority of respondents demonstrated good self-care practices. Out of the 200 participants, 129 (64.5%) reported good self-care practices, while 71 (35.5%) exhibited poor self-care practices. These results suggest that good self-

Frontier in Medical & Health Research

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care practices were more common among the respondents than poor self-care practices.

Table # 3: Self-care Practice among Hostel and Home students

living	Good self-care Practice	Poor self-care practice
Hostel	69.8%	15.5%
Home	30.2%	84.5%

The study examined the relationship between living arrangement and self-care practices among the respondents. The results showed that 69.8% of respondents with good self-care practices were living in hostels, whereas 30.2% were living at home. In comparison, among respondents with poor self-care practices, 84.5% were living at home and 15.5% were residing in hostels. These findings suggest a higher proportion of good self-care practices among hostel residents, while poor self-care practices were more frequently observed among respondents living at home.

Discussions.

The present study assessed the demographic characteristics and self-care practices among respondents and examined the relationship between living arrangement and self-care practices. The findings showed that most participants were aged 20–22 years (46.8%), followed by 17–19 years (41.3%) and 23–25 years (11.4%). The present study's findings align with the study conducted on self-care behavior and practice the at selected hospitals in which the results showed that more than 55% of participants were aged between 20 to 23 years, 35.7 % of the participants were aged between 24-27 years(Babiarczyk & Sternal, 2022). The study finding revealed that sample was predominantly male (92%), while females accounted for only 8%. This study finding further contrast with the study conducted in the Self-care practice and academic performance among nursing students in which the study findings revealed that 70% of the participants were females(Barbakh et al., 2026).

The Present study result indicate that in terms of academic level, most respondents were in the second year (63%), followed by third year (29.5%) and first year (7.5%). These findings indicate that the study population mainly consisted of young adult male students, with a higher proportion in the middle stage of their academic program(Cohen et al., 2023). The present study contrast with study conducted on the self-care practice of baccalaureate nursing student in which the study finding revealed that 67% of the participants were in the 3rd year(Nkabinde-Thamae & Downing, 2024).

The study finding further revealed that 64.5% of students had good self-care practices, while 35.5% demonstrated poor self-care practices. This indicates that although a majority of students practice appropriate self-care behaviors, a significant proportion still engage in inadequate practices(Durán-Gómez et al., 2023). This highlights the need for continued health education and awareness programs to improve self-care behaviors among students. This study findings aligned with the study students by (albert, 2024), the study revealed that 75 % of the nursing students had a good self-care partice(Rink et al., 2023).

The results further showed that higher proportion of students with good self-care practices were living in hostels (69.8%) compared to those living at home (30.2%). In contrast, poor self-care practices were more common among students living at home (84.5%) than those residing in hostels (15.5%)(Williams et al., 2022). This suggests that hostel living may encourage better self-care practices due to structured routines, independence, and peer influence, whereas students living at home may have less structured daily habits(Fairchild & Tully, 2025).Overall, the findings emphasize that living environment plays an important role in shaping self-care practices among students.

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Limitations

The study relied on self-reported responses, which may have been affected by recall and social desirability bias.

The findings may not be generalizable because the study was conducted at a single institution.

The cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between self-care practices and study outcomes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Health education programs should be strengthened to improve self-care practices among students.
2. Institutions should organize regular awareness sessions on hygiene, nutrition, sleep, and personal care.
3. Future studies should be conducted across multiple nursing institutions using longitudinal study designs to enhance the generalizability of the findings and evaluate changes in self-care practices over time.

Conclusion

The study concludes that most respondents had good self-care practices; however, a considerable proportion still demonstrated poor practices. Living arrangement was found to influence self-care behavior, with hostel residents showing better practices compared to those living at home. This highlights the importance of promoting self-care awareness among students, particularly those living in home settings.

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