

**ATTITUDE TOWARDS AND WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE
IN CARING FOR THE ELDERLY PEOPLE AMONG
NURSING STUDENTS IN WESTERN PROVINCE SRI
LANKA.**

**A DISSERTATION BY
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ABSTRACT

The world's population is ageing due to demographic and epidemiological transition. Ageing is associated with declining overall functions of the body resulting loss of life activities and worsening chronic diseases. Similar to many other countries of the world, Sri Lanka still as a developing country encounter a systematic increase in the number of elderly people in the general population and it's expected to triple at 2050. Ageism is an attitude leading for discrimination against elderly people. Today's student nurses as the candidates for the future nursing profession will frequently contact with elderly people. their attitudes towards elderly people and the willingness to engage with caring for elderly people are important for this reason. The aim of this study is to determine the attitudes of student nurses towards elderly people willingness to care for elderly people and the factors associated with attitude towards and willingness to care for elderly people. The study was cross sectional and the setting was three school of nursing in the Western province Sri Lanka. Data was collected from January to February 2020 by using self-administered questionnaire which includes demographic and general characteristics form and Kogan's Attitudes for Older People scale. (KAOP Scale). Study participants were 258 student nurses who were in the third year at the time of data collection. Ethical approval was obtained from the university Ethical Review Board at Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. Collected data was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and Microsoft Excel 2017. Findings from the study showed that majority of student nurses (84%) have positive attitudes towards elderly people. Although 87% of participants prefer to work with elderly people only 23% of them have given gerontology nursing as the first, second or third preferred specialty area of work after graduation. A statistically significant relationship found between student nurses' attitudes towards elderly people and frequent communication with elderly people, willingness to care for elderly people and knowledge on geriatrics and intention to work with elderly people. It is clear that student nurses' attitudes could be developed by the socialization takes place throughout their training. Gerontology education and training should focus on making this socialization utilitarian in changing student nurses' attitudes and enhancing the willingness to care for elderly people. Therefore, this study recommends the nursing programme curriculum be revised to improve student nurse's knowledge on geriatrics and to establish clinical facility for gerontology nursing practice in order to give opportunities for student nurses to be more contact with care for elderly people.

Key Words: Aging, Ageism, Attitude, Willingness, Gerontology