

SHORT REPORT

# Attitudes toward older adults among nursing students in a private university, Thailand

**Kanyaphat Setchoduk**

*M.N.S. Bernadette de Lourdes School of Nursing Science, Assumption University, Thailand*

*Corresponding author: Kanyaphat Setchoduk Email: Chauthong\_pachy@hotmail.com*

*Received: 29 May 2015 Revised: 16 August 2015 Accepted: 18 August 2015*

*Available online: August 2015*

## Abstract

Setchoduk K.

Attitudes toward older adults among nursing students in a private university, Thailand.

J Pub. Health Dev. 2015; 13(2):3-16

The research aimed to explore the nursing students' attitude toward older adults and factors influencing nursing students' attitude toward older adults. The cross-sectional survey was designed to serve this purpose. 192 questionnaires were distributed to all active nursing students who enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2013. The nursing students' attitude toward older adults is assessed by Modified Kogan's Old People Scale (Modified KOPS) with its reliability tested by Cronbach's alpha coefficient based on 20 nursing students and the value was 0.683. The Chi square test for independence were utilized for examining factors influencing nursing students' attitude toward older adults respectively.

A total of 151 questionnaires (78.65% has been returned), the mean value of Modified KOPS score was at moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 121.58$ ,  $SD = 6.73$ ). Age, religion and year of study were the significant factors influencing nursing students' attitude toward older adults. Furthermore, the Modified KOPS statement analysis found that gender, nationality, and social interaction with older adult including having older adult care experiences, living with older adults relatives, and being in a close relationship with an older adult in the family were significant factors influencing nursing student's attitudes toward older adults.

The research findings suggested that nursing students have the moderate level of attitude toward older adults and the attitude of the nursing students have been progressively increased throughout their study in this nursing program. Therefore, all nursing instructors must pay attention to conduct teaching-learning activities to enhance students' positive attitude toward older adult. It is critical that the nursing curriculum must prepare essential knowledge in both theoretical and clinical aspects of gerontology in order to create positive attitude toward older adults and consequently increase the quality of care improvement.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Older adult, Elderly, Nursing student

# ทัศนคติต่อผู้สูงอายุของนักศึกษาพยาบาล ในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนแห่งหนึ่ง

กัญพัชร เศรษฐ์โชฎิก

M.N.S. คณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยอัสสัมชัญ ประเทศไทย

## บทคัดย่อ

กัญพัชร เศรษฐ์โชฎิก

ทัศนคติต่อผู้สูงอายุของนักศึกษาพยาบาลในมหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนแห่งหนึ่ง

ว. สาธารณสุขและการพัฒนา. 2558; 13(2):3-16

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระดับทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาล และปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลต่อผู้สูงอายุ โดยทำการวิจัยแบบตัดขวาง กลุ่มตัวอย่างคือนักศึกษาพยาบาลจำนวน 192 คนที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนในภาคการศึกษาที่ 1 ปีการศึกษา 2556 ในคณะพยาบาลศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยเอกชนแห่งหนึ่ง เครื่องมือในการวัดระดับทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลต่อผู้สูงอายุคือ Modified Kogan's Old People Scale (Modified KOPS) ซึ่งทดสอบความน่าเชื่อถือของเครื่องมือด้วย Cronbach's alpha coefficient ได้เท่ากับ 0.683 ใช้สถิติเชิงบรรยายแจกแจงความถี่และหาค่าเฉลี่ย และใช้สถิติทดสอบความเป็นอิสระต่อกันของสองตัวแปร เพื่อทดสอบความสัมพันธ์ของปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลต่อผู้สูงอายุ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่านักศึกษาตอบแบบสอบถามทั้งหมด 151 คน (78.65%) และค่าเฉลี่ยระดับทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลศาสตร์ต่อผู้สูงอายุอยู่ในระดับปานกลาง ( $\bar{X} = 121.58$ ,  $SD = 6.73$ ) และพบว่าอายุ ศาสนา และปีการศึกษาของนักศึกษาพยาบาลมีความสัมพันธ์กับทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลต่อผู้สูงอายุอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ การวิเคราะห์ข้อคำถามรายข้อพบว่าเพศ เชื้อชาติ และการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ทางสังคมกับผู้สูงอายุ ซึ่งประกอบด้วย การมีประสบการณ์ในการดูแลผู้สูงอายุ การอาศัยอยู่ร่วมกับญาติที่เป็นผู้สูงอายุ และการเคยมีความสัมพันธ์ใกล้ชิดกับผู้สูงอายุ มีความสัมพันธ์กับทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลต่อผู้สูงอายุอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ

ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่านักศึกษาพยาบาลมีทัศนคติอยู่ในระดับปานกลางต่อผู้สูงอายุซึ่งพบว่าทัศนคติของนักศึกษาพยาบาลเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างต่อเนื่องจากการศึกษาตลอดหลักสูตรพยาบาลศาสตร์ ดังนั้นอาจารย์พยาบาลต้องให้ความสนใจในการจัดรูปแบบการเรียนการสอนเพื่อเพิ่มระดับทัศนคติทางบวกและปรับลดทัศนคติด้านลบที่มีต่อผู้สูงอายุซึ่งอาจเกิดจากประสบการณ์ในอดีตของนักศึกษา อีกทั้งการจัดการความรู้และประสบการณ์ในการดูแลผู้สูงอายุแก่นักศึกษาพยาบาลจำเป็นต้องคำนึงถึงปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อทัศนคติของนักศึกษาต่อผู้สูงอายุด้วย บุคลากรทางการศึกษาพยาบาลจำเป็นต้องจัดการความรู้และประสบการณ์ที่จำเป็นแก่นักศึกษาทั้งทางด้านทฤษฎีและปฏิบัติที่เกี่ยวข้องกับผู้สูงอายุเพื่อให้ นักศึกษามีความพร้อมทั้งความรู้และทัศนคติที่ดีในการดูแลผู้สูงอายุอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

คำสำคัญ: ทัศนคติ นักศึกษาพยาบาล ผู้สูงอายุ

## Introduction

The aging population are increasing drastically worldwide as illustrated by the number of the world aging population in 2013. This number has increased four times since 1950 and will be constantly increasing to approximately threefold by 2050. Namely, there were a world record of 202 million older adults in 1950 and this number has become 841 million in 2013.<sup>1</sup> Similarly to the world aging phenomena, Asian countries are also now facing with rapid increase of aging population and aging society issues. The total population of aging in ASEAN countries is 37 million or 6 % of all population.<sup>2</sup> The survey of Thai older adult situation by Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (TGRI) in the year 2011 revealed that Thailand (12.9%) is the second highest proportion of older adult population among ASEAN countries next to Singapore (14%).<sup>3</sup>

With reference to the statistics of Thai older adult population, Thailand has been steadily developing to be aging society since 2005 similarly to Japan and Singapore.<sup>4</sup> In 2014, 15.3 per cent of total Thai population is older adult.<sup>2</sup> According to Thai culture, older adults usually reside in extended family with their children and grandchildren. Majority of older adults are residing in Northeastern region of Thailand followed by Central, Northern, and Southern regions respectively.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the controversy of increasing rate of aging population in Thailand, Thai people's attitude toward the older adult has been deteriorating. The positive attitude of adult (aged 18 – 59) was 62 per cent in 2007 but then dropped to 57 per cent in 2011 reflecting worse attitude of younger generations toward the older adults.<sup>3</sup>

There are many factors affecting attitude of the younger people toward the older adults. Numerous studies in the past illustrated that this is due to ageism. Ageism is the stereotyping and discriminating against others on the basis of their age.<sup>26</sup> Bulter (1975) cited by Slevin (1991) stated that the stereotype associated with old age are the belief of being slow, cantankerous, feeble, dirty, and uninteresting existed by older adult leading to prejudiced attitudes, actions and societal marginalization.<sup>29,30</sup> Ageist attitude among health care providers especially nurses, who is a direct care giver, largely affects the quality of older adult care.<sup>27</sup> Ageism can deprive older adults of a control on their own lives that consequently force them to have a dependent status, and violate their rights regarding human and citizenship as well as prevent them from urgency social service when facing with physical and psychological abuses.<sup>28</sup> Ageist attitude also caused older adults to lose their core strength needed to adapt to the next passage of life resulting in depression, isolation, and anxiety.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, negative attitude and beliefs (ageism) toward older adults of health care providers can adversely impact the well-being and health outcomes for older adult clients.<sup>27</sup>

Nurses are obligated to recognize all aspects of aging changes and respond to the specific diverse demands of older adult's care in a similar way to the care for other nursing fields. Nursing education is required to prepare readiness for nursing students to face with existing world health issues of increased older adult population. Beside the knowledge and skills, the most desirable nursing graduates' characteristic is the positive attitude toward the profession and the client, particularly in older adult as mentioned

by Kydd (2013). That means good care for older adult is determined by positive attitude of health care provider rather than actual treatment of their conditions.<sup>6</sup> Wells et al. (2004) also supported that the positive attitude of health care provider toward older adult also proved to correspond to the quality of care given to the older adults.<sup>5</sup>

The knowledge of basic concepts of older adult care have been taught to baccalaureate nursing student of an international nursing program at a private university of Thailand through various teaching methods in order to provide the well-round knowledge to care the older adults. Apart from knowledge, students' attitude toward older adult has also been emphasized and inspired throughout the curriculum but the achievement has not yet been assessed.

In the past few centuries, there were some researches conducted in both acute and chronic care settings for measuring the nurses' and nursing students' attitude toward older adult in various countries. The exploration of nursing students' attitude in each study shows different results and influential factors affecting nursing students' attitude. Additionally, the study of nursing students' attitude toward older adult in Thailand is limited and each nursing program is unique, so the results might not be the good representative of other program. This study will be beneficial for curriculum development and research results will be used for improving teaching learning activities to promote nursing students' optimistic attitude toward older adult people and prepare high quality future nurse in older adult care.

The objectives of this research are to explore the level of nursing students' attitudes toward older adults and to identify factors influencing nursing students' attitudes toward older adults

## Methods

The cross-sectional survey design is used to assess attitude toward the older adult among the nursing students from one private university in Bangkok, Thailand. All of nursing students were surveyed as populations totaling of 192 active nursing students who enrolled to study in the second semester of academic year 2013.

Research instrument of this study comprises two parts. First part of questionnaire has 10 items and it includes demographic data, sociocultural factors and social interaction with older adult that is based on literature review of the previous studies as factors influencing nursing students' and nurses' attitudes toward older adults. The second part was Modified Kogan's Old People Scale (modified KOPS) developed by Professor Emeritus Kogan Nathan (1961)<sup>25</sup> with modified contents and wordings to comply with cultural sensitivity and English proficiency of nursing students and older adults in Thailand. KOPS has been used worldwide to assess the people's attitudes toward older adult and it has been translated into many languages with internal consistency of the scale ranging from 0.66 to 0.85.<sup>7</sup>

Modified KOPS is a paper-and-pencil self-administered questionnaire consisting of 34 items, which should take approximately 10 – 15 minutes to complete. The items of this scale are divided into 17 positive statements (even numbers) and 17 negative statements (odd numbers) that include respect to both norms an individual differences, stereotypes and misconceptions toward older adults.<sup>7</sup> Modified KOPS is six-point Likert scale ranked from strongly disagree, slightly disagree, disagree, agree, slightly agree, and strongly agree respectively.

The sum of the attitude score can be rated from the lowest of 34 score to the highest of 204 score. The nursing students' attitude was divided into three levels by the percentile of Modified KOPS score consisted of score less than the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile = low level (34 – 117), score between the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile -75<sup>th</sup> percentile = moderate level (118 - 124), and score above 75<sup>th</sup> percentile = high level (125 – 204) of attitude toward older adult respectively. The reliability of Modified KOPS in this study is tested by Cronbach's alpha coefficient with 20 nursing students resulting in a value of 0.683.

#### Data collection and analysis

All participants were approached by three trained research assistants who were third-year nursing students with informed consent provided. All participants were given a cover letter explaining the objective of the study, the right to participate and to withdraw from the study and data security methods. A participation to the study was voluntary and anonymous. A set of self-administered questionnaires were distributed to all participants. Descriptive statistics was utilized for data analysis through computer software program. Chi square test of independence was utilized for analyzing the relationship between factors and students' attitude toward older adults.

#### Results

A total of 192 questionnaires were distributed and 151 questionnaires returned, the response rate of this research study is approximately 78.7%. The demographic data show that majority of participants is female (85.4 %) and an average age is 21.6 years old (SD = 2.32) (Max = 32, Min = 18). A number of students participation based on their year of study are 36 (23.9 %), 31 (20.5 %), 23 (15.2 %) and 61 (40.4 %) for freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior students respectively.

The sociocultural factors reveal that most of the participants are Thai nationality (66.2%) and Buddhist (71.5 %). They used to have social interaction with the older adult as manifested by 73.5% of the participants claiming that they have experience in staying in the same house with the family member who is over 60 years old. Additionally, more than half of all participants (59.0%) have experience in taking care of an older adult. Regarding the duration of older adult care, it varies from less than one year (40.3%), one to 5 years (15.4%), more than 5 years (12.1%) and a lack of an experience (32.2%) respectively. Moreover, most of all participants (79.3%) have a close relationship with an older adult in the family before or during their study in a Nursing Science program (Table 1).

**Table 1** Number and percentage of respondents by demographic factors

Factors	Number	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
- 18 - 20 years old	53	36.3
- > 20 years old	93	63.7
<b>Gender</b>		
- Male	22	14.6
- Female	129	85.4
<b>Nationality</b>		
- Thai	100	66.2
- Non-Thai	51	33.8
<b>Religion</b>		
- Buddhism	108	71.5
- Other (s)	43	28.5
<b>Year of study</b>		
- Freshmen	36	23.9
- Sophomore	31	20.5
- Junior	23	15.2
- Senior	61	40.4
<b>Living with older adult relatives</b>		
- Yes	111	73.5
- No	40	26.5
<b>Older adult care experience</b>		
- Have	89	59.0
- Not have	61	41.0
<b>Duration of the older adult care</b>		
- Never	48	32.2
- Less than 1 year	60	40.3
- One to 5 years	23	15.4
- More than 5 years	18	12.1
<b>Ever have a close relationship with an older adult in the family before or during studying Nursing Science program</b>		
- Yes	119	79.3
- No	31	20.7

The analysis of the summation of all items of the Modified KOPS score of the nursing students revealed that more than half (53.6%) of the nursing students has moderate level of attitude toward older adult and nearly quarter of them has low level (22.5%) and high level (23.9%) of attitudes toward older adult respectively. The mean of Modified KOPS score is 121.58 (SD= 6.73) (Max = 162, Min = 108), which is considered a moderate level of attitude toward older adult.

The Chi-square test for independence was performed to analyze the relationship of factors influencing nursing students' attitude toward older adult. The results show that age, religion, and year of study are the significant factors influencing nursing students' attitude toward older adult. (Table 2)

**Table 2** Factors influencing nursing students' attitudes toward older adults

Factors		Nursing students' attitude score						P-value
		Low		Moderate		High		
		n	%	n	%	n	%	
Age (Years old)	18 - 20	15	28.3	35	66.0	3	5.7	.000*
	≥ 21	18	19.4	42	45.2	33	35.4	
Gender	Male	3	13.6	13	59.1	6	27.3	.557
	Female	31	24.0	68	52.7	30	23.3	
Nationality	Thai	24	24.0	54	54.0	22	22.0	.699
	Non-Thai	10	19.6	27	52.9	14	27.5	
Religion	Buddhism	29	26.9	59	54.6	20	18.5	.021**
	Other (s)	5	11.6	22	51.2	16	37.2	
Year of study	Freshmen	13	36.1	21	58.3	2	5.6	.012*
	Sophomore	6	19.4	20	64.5	5	16.1	
	Junior	5	21.7	12	52.2	6	26.1	
	Senior	10	16.4	28	45.9	23	37.7	
Living with older adult relatives	Yes	26	23.4	56	50.5	29	26.1	.393
	No	8	20.0	25	62.5	7	17.5	
Older adult care experience	Have	16	18.0	47	52.8	26	29.2	.100
	Not have	18	29.5	33	54.1	10	16.4	
Duration of the older adult care	Never	13	27.1	27	56.3	8	16.6	.292
	< 1 year	14	23.3	34	56.7	12	20.0	
	1- 5 years	4	17.4	12	52.2	7	30.4	
	> 5 years	2	11.1	8	44.4	8	44.4	
Ever have a close relationship with an older adult in the family before or during studying Nursing Science program	Yes	26	21.9	65	54.6	28	23.5	.951
	No	7	22.6	16	51.6	8	25.8	

\*p-value < 0.01

\*\* p-value < 0.05

The analysis of the relationship between factors and 34 statements of Modified KOPS by Chi-square test for independence is performed. Even though various factors are significantly correlated with the statements, more than 20% of the expected counts are less than 5 and this is a restriction of Chi-square test. The six-point Likert scales of Modified KOPS that is ranked from strongly disagree, slightly disagree,

disagree, agree, slightly agree, and strongly agree are converted to agree and disagree, which is a two-point scale. Chi-square test for independence is then re-analyzed.

The factors which significantly correlated with the statements of Modified KOPS ( $p < 0.05$ ) are revealed in Table 3.

**Table 3** The relationship between Modified KOPS statements and factors influencing nursing students' attitudes toward older adults

No. of Modified KOPS attitude statement	Factor	Nursing students' attitude		P-value
		Disagree n (%)	Agree n (%)	
1. It would probably be better if most old people (65 years old or above) could live together in same residential units.	<b>Older adult care experience</b>			
	- Yes	63 (70.8)	26 (29.2)	.040
	- No	52 (85.3)	9 (14.7)	
7. Most old people would prefer to quit work as soon as pensions or their children can provide financial support for them	<b>Living with older adult relatives</b>			
	- Yes	70 (63.1)	41 (36.9)	.050
	- No	32 (80.0)	8 (20.0)	
	<b>Nationality</b>			
	- Thai	74 (74.0)	26 (26.0)	.018
- Non-Thai	28 (54.9)	23 (45.1)		
11. It is foolish to claim that wisdom comes with age.	<b>Older adult care experience</b>			
	- Yes	38 (42.7)	51 (57.3)	.018
	- No	38 (62.3)	23 (37.7)	
23. In order to maintain a nice residential neighborhood, it would be best if too many old people did not live in it.	<b>Living with older adult relatives</b>			
	- Yes	51 (45.9)	60 (54.1)	.039
	- No	26 (65.0)	14 (35.0)	

**Table 3** The relationship between Modified KOPS statements and factors influencing nursing students' attitudes toward older adults (Conts.)

No. of Modified KOPS attitude statement	Factor	Nursing students' attitude		P-value
		Disagree n (%)	Agree n (%)	
29. Most old people are irritable, grouchy, and unpleasant	Ever have a close relationship with an older adult in the family			
	- Yes	52 (43.7)	67 (56.3)	.007
	- No	22 (71.0)	9 (29.0)	
30. Most old people are cheerful, agreeable, and good humored.	Ever have a close relationship with an older adult in the family			
	- Yes	22 (18.5)	97 (81.5)	.042
	- No	11 (35.5)	20 (64.5)	
32. One seldom hears old people complaining about the behavior of the younger generation	Gender			
	- Male	9 (40.9)	13 (59.1)	.033
	- Female	26 (20.2)	103 (79.8)	
33. Most old people make excessive demands for love and reassurance than anyone else.	Older adult care experience			
	- Yes	62 (69.7)	27 (30.3)	.003
	- No	55 (90.2)	6 (9.8)	

## Discussion

The aims of this study are to explore the level of nursing students' attitudes toward older adults and to identify factors influencing those attitudes. The findings of this study show that all nursing students of this private international university have moderate level of attitude toward older adults, which is similar to the studies in Jordan<sup>7</sup> and Netherlands<sup>8</sup>.

The analyzing of the factors influencing nursing students' attitudes toward older adults reveal that the nursing students' age, religion, and year of study were

correlated with the nursing students' attitude toward older adult. This confirmative finding of age and year of study that correlated with the nursing student attitude toward older adult shows that the teaching-learning activities of the particular gerontology nursing course have been focused and achieved on the attitude in older adult care. The specific gerontology nursing course provided 15 hours of class lecture and 40 – 48 hours of the nursing practicum at one specific older adult care center, which is able to increase the attitude of the students toward older adult. Preferably,

the students gradually increase their level of attitude toward older adult year by year throughout their study in nursing program.

This current study finding is in agreement with the previous studies because it has been found that the gerontological education is one way to improve nurses' attitude toward older adults.<sup>5,13,14</sup> Additionally, some studies also found that students' positive attitude are related to their factual experience in practicing in clinical setting with older adult.<sup>15</sup> Nursing staff, clinical supervisor, and teacher are an influential factor affecting nursing students' attitude. Thus, the nursing educators should provide opportunities for their students to take care of healthy older adults in different environments as well as community settings to improve their attitude toward older adults.<sup>16</sup> Apart from nursing profession, the previous studies also found the change of medical students' attitude toward older adults that has been affected by the education.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the study about multidimensional attitudes of medical residents and geriatrics fellows toward older adult also found that medical residents' professional experience was the most significant predictor for a positive attitude and their attitude score steadily increased through the first 2 years of residency.<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, the Modified KOPS statement analysis illustrated that there are two more demographic factors influencing the attitudes of nursing students toward older adults which are gender and nationality.

Gender or sex of nursing student was found to be significantly correlated with the nursing students' attitude toward older adult. According to the majority of participants being female and Thai that may be affected by Thai culture, daughters are commonly

responsible to take care of parents when they become old causing female nursing students to have more preferable attitude toward older adult in comparison with male nursing students. Moreover, this research finding is supported by the study of Söderhamn (2011) in Sweden, which found that gender is one of the factors influencing feelings of nursing students and registered nurses toward older adult.<sup>12</sup> The study of Slevin (1991) also stated that gender socialization directly influences females to have more positive attitudes toward the older adult than males.<sup>29</sup> This is similar to other studies that claim male nursing students having less favorable feelings toward older adult.<sup>19, 35</sup>

The attitudes toward older adult show the correlation with the nationality of the nursing students. According to the nature of an international university of Thailand, this nursing school is an international nursing program with all classes conducted in English and it has a number of international students with different nationalities. Based on the majority of the students with Thai nationality, this finding may be explained by the Thai culture of older adult care. Thai older adults usually stay with their child in an extended family, which is not the case for European or American families. Namely, older adults in these families usually prefer to live alone or with their partners in their own house and they still prefer to stay at a nursing home rather than to stay with their children when they become totally dependent.<sup>32</sup> Once the older adults are cared by younger people in the family, the attitude of care giver is also being affected by the past experience of older adult care<sup>20</sup>, which is similar to the existing findings of older adult care experience in this study. The finding is supported by

Ryan M (2004/2005) which found that the attitude of baccalaureate nursing students toward the older adult was significantly related among ethnic groups. Hispanic/Latino students scored significantly higher than black students on the attitudinal measure but no significant with Asian group.<sup>33</sup> Apart of nationality and culture, the religion background of the students that correlated with the nursing students' attitude toward older adult needed to be further explored because there are various religions and beliefs affected by nationality and culture of the students as context of international institution.

Moreover, social interaction with older adult including having older adult care experiences, living with older adult relatives, and being in a close relationship with an older adult in the family are factors influencing nursing student's attitudes toward older adult.

This finding may be related to the older adult care experiences of the students included the past experience to take care of older adult relatives in their family before entering a nursing profession or present experience to take care of older adult patients during practicing as nursing student in the hospital and those experiences are factors interfering their attitude. The previous studies found that positive attitude toward older adult of nursing students is significantly associated with past experience in working with older adult<sup>20,21,22</sup> and some evidences strongly support that the learning experience with positive clinical aged-care directly affects students' attitude toward older adult.<sup>23,24</sup> In another hand, some studies shown that the negative attitude of nurses was influenced by a lack of contact or interaction with well-older adult.<sup>34</sup> Thus, further studies about the previous aspects of nursing

students' experiences of older adult care that affect nursing students' attitude toward older adult need to be explored in both personal and clinical engagement experience throughout a nursing program.

The research findings suggested that the nursing students have moderate level of attitude toward older adult. Therefore, all nursing instructors must pay attention to conduct teaching-learning activities to enhance nursing students' positive attitude and reduce pessimistic thoughts toward older adult. The previous studies demonstrated that various kinds of research interventions were effective to significantly improve the students' attitude toward older adult. For example, the conduct of integrated adult/older adult course for nursing students that included 42-hour of theoretical class, 14-hour of laboratory practice, and 144-hour of extensive practice with older adult patients<sup>9</sup>, the organizing of a "Council of Elders" for the medical student that provided 75-minute dialogue with a group of active and well older adults<sup>10</sup>, and older adult Simulation Program for the nursing assistants that included a 1-hour lecture class about aging changes and a 1-hour simulation of the older adult and nurse roles.<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

As global population change, a large number of older adult are calling for all nurses' attention to care them with proper understanding on their bio-psycho-social changes. Beside the knowledge provided from the four-year nursing program, positive attitude of nurses toward older adult will make a nursing care an accomplishment that is filled with satisfaction. Additionally, knowledge and experience delivered to the nursing students should be associated with

prevailing factors affecting their attitude. Nursing educators from the nursing schools are also required to prepare essential knowledge and experience both in theoretical and clinical aspects of gerontology for the nursing students with the purpose to increase positive attitude toward older adult alongside an improvement on care quality.

### References

1. Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations [online]. World population aging 2013 report. Available from <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/ageing/WorldPopulationAgeing2013.shtml> [Accessed 2014 Apr 29].
2. Institute for population and social research Mahidol University [online]. Population aging in Thailand, 2014. Available from [www.ipsr.mahidol.ac.th/ipsr-th](http://www.ipsr.mahidol.ac.th/ipsr-th) [Accessed 2014 Apr 29].
3. Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute [online]. Situation of the Thai Elderly 2011. Available from [www.thaitgri.org/images/ElderSituations/situationofthailand-deldereng2010.pdf](http://www.thaitgri.org/images/ElderSituations/situationofthailand-deldereng2010.pdf) [Accessed 2014 May 1].
4. National Statistical Office [online]. The report on the 2007 survey of the older persons in Thailand. Available from [http://service.nso.go.th/nso/nsopublish/service/Survey/rep\\_older50.pdf](http://service.nso.go.th/nso/nsopublish/service/Survey/rep_older50.pdf) [Accessed 2014 May 1].
5. Wells Y, Foreman P, Gething L, and Petralia W. Nurses' attitudes toward aging and older adults. *J Gerontol Nurs* 2004; September: 5-13.
6. Kydd A and Wild D. Attitudes toward caring for older people: Literature review and methodology. *Nurs Older People* 2013; 25(3): 22-7.
7. Hweidi I M, and Al-Hassan M A. Jordanian nurses' attitudes toward older patients in acute care setting. *Int Nurs Rev* 2005; 52: 225 – 32.
8. Bleijenberg N, Jansen M J M, and Schuurmans M J. Dutch nursing students' knowledge and attitudes toward older people – a longitudinal cohort study. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice* 2012; 2 (2): 1-8.
9. Baumbusch J, Dahlke S, and Phinney A. Nursing students' knowledge and beliefs about care of older adults in a shifting context of nursing education. *J Adv Nurs* 2012; 68(11): 2550-8.
10. Westmoreland G R, Counsel S R, Sennour Y, Schubert C C, Frank K I, Wu J et al. Improving medical student attitudes toward older patients through a "Council of elders" and reflective writing experience. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2009; 57:315-20.
11. Yu C and Chen K. Experiencing simulated aging improves knowledge of and attitudes toward aging. *J Am Geriatr Soc*; 60: 957-61.
12. Söderhamn O, Lindencrona C, and Gustavsson S M. Attitudes toward older people among nursing students and registered nurses in Sweden. *Nurse Educ Today* 2001; 21: 225-9.
13. Williams B, Anderson M C, and Day R. Undergraduate nursing students' knowledge of and attitudes toward aging: Comparison of context-based learning and a traditional program. *J Nurs Educ* 2007; 46 (3): 115-20.
14. Engström G and Fagerberg I. Attitudes toward older people among Swedish health care students and health care professional working in elder care. *Nurs Rep* 2011; 1e2: 2-6.

15. McLafferty I and Morrison F. Attitudes toward hospitalized older adults. *J Adv Nurs* 2004; 47(4): 446-53.
16. Swanlund S and Kujath A. Attitudes of Baccalaureate nursing students toward older adults: A pilot study. *Nurs Educ Perspect* 2012; 33 (3): 181-3.
17. Hughes N J, Soiza R L, Chua M, Hoyle G E, MacDonald A, Primrose W R et al. Medical student attitudes toward older people and willingness to consider a career in geriatric medicine. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2007; 56 (2): 334-8.
18. Lee M, Reuben D B and Ferrell B A. Multidimensional attitudes of medical residents and geriatrics fellows toward older people. *J Am Geriatr Soc* 2005; 53 (3): 489- 94.
19. Deltsidou A, Gesouli-Voltyraki E, Mastrogiannis D, Mantzorou M and Noula M. Nurse teachers' and student nurses' attitudes toward caring the older people in a province of Greece. *Health Science Journal* 2010; 4 (4): 245 – 57.
20. Henderson J, Xiao L, Siegloff L, Kelton M and Paterson J. 'Older people have lived their lives': First year nursing students' attitudes toward older people. *Contemp Nurse* 2008; 30: 32 – 45.
21. Holroyd A, Dahlke S, Fehr C, Jung P and Hunter A. Attitudes toward aging: Implications for a caring profession. *J Nurs Educ* 2009; 48 (7): 374-80.
22. Stewart J J, Giles L, Paterson J E and Butter S J. Knowledge and attitudes toward older people: New Zealand students entering health professional degrees. *Phys Occup Ther Geriatr* 2005; 23(4): 25-3.
23. Bernard M. Overcoming ageism, one student at a time: Mentoring programs improve student attitudes toward older patients. *Geriatrics* 2004; 59(12): 11.
24. Rodgers V and Gilmour J. Shaping student nurses' attitudes toward older people through learning and experience. *Nurs Pract N Z* 2011; 27(3): 13-20.
25. Kogan N. Attitudes toward old people: The development of a scale and an examination of correlates. *J Abnorm Soc Psychol* 1961; 62:44-54.
26. Wikipedia. [Online]. Ageism. Available from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ageism> [Accessed 2015 July 23].
27. Reyna C, Goodwin E J and Ferrari J R. Older adult stereotypes among care providers in residential care facilities. *J Gerontol Nurs* 2007; February: 50-5.
28. Ward D. Ageism and the abuse of older people in health and social care. *Br J Nurs* 2000; 9 (9): 560 – 3.
29. Slevin O D'A. Ageist attitudes among young adults: implications for a caring profession. *J Adv Nurs* 1991; 16: 1197 – 205.
30. Phelan A. Elder abuse, ageism, human rights and citizenship: implications for nursing discourse. *Nurs Inq* 2008; 15 (4): 320-9.
31. Letvak S. Myths and realities of ageism and nursing. *AORN J* 2002; 75 (6): 1101 – 7.
32. Harrefors C, Sävenstedt S and Axelsson K. Elderly people's perceptions of how they want to be cared for: an interview study with healthy elderly couples in Northern Sweden. *Scand J Caring Sci* 2009; 23: 353 – 60.

33. Ryan M and McCauley D. We built it and they did not come: knowledge and attitudes of baccalaureate nursing students toward the elderly. J N Y State Nurses Assoc 2004/2005; Fall/Winter: 5 – 9.
34. Marshall L C. Student's corner: potential implications of registered nurse attitudes toward caring for older people. *Contemp Nurse* 2010; 35 (1): 95 – 9.
35. Lun M W A. Student knowledge and attitudes toward older people and their impact on pursuing aging careers. *Educ Gerontol*; 37: 1-11.