

**Poster Session IV
Poster #15**

Nurse Interaction with Individuals with Persistent Mental Illnesses: The Acute Phase Experience

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Purpose: The purpose of this ongoing research is to document nurses' verbal and nonverbal behaviors (and the patient's responses) when interacting with a patient with schizophrenia. The poster session will highlight background literature, the elements being examined, and preliminary data obtained.

Background: The therapeutic relationship between nurse and patient forms the basis of psychiatric nursing care. Yet, individuals with schizophrenia have difficulty with the subtleties of relating to others. They exhibit impairment in recognizing facial and vocal affect cues, in processing emotions, and developing social skills. These deficits influence the smooth flow of communication between nurse and patient. No studies in nursing have addressed the impact of these social cognitive deficits on the nurse - patient relationship.

Methods: The study is qualitative descriptive. There are four nurse and 12 patient participants. Each patient has a diagnosis of schizophrenia. The study takes place when patients are in the acute phase of their illness. Data is being collected via observation, field notes, and audio-tape recording of an interaction during a medication administration session. A post interaction interview of each nurse is also done.

Elements to be Examined: 1) the verbal and nonverbal behaviors used by a nurse when interacting with a patient with schizophrenia, 2) the verbal and nonverbal response of the patient to the nurse during any one encounter, 3) reflections of the nurse in terms of intentionality versus spontaneity of communication with an individual who is psychotic.

Importance for Nursing Science: There are currently no research studies which focus on the verbal and nonverbal interventions used by nurses when caring for the individual with a persistent and severe mental illness. Nursing standards, policy, and education can be augmented by clinical research which provides guidelines for the interaction between the nurse and individuals with social cognitive deficits.