

## *Nursing Students' Perceptions about Roles of Pediatric Nurses and Clinical Practices*

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The aim of this study was to determine experiences and perceptions of nursing students about the roles of pediatric nurses and clinical practices. A qualitative approach using focus groups was chosen. A purposive sample of twenty-seven participants (fourteen female and sixteen male), who completed the course of pediatric nursing successfully, in a health high school in Turkey, were invited to participate. Four focus groups were conducted with six to seven participants in each group. Sociodemographic form and semi-structured interview form were used for data collection. Interviews during the focus groups have been recorded on a tape-recorder. Thematic content analysis was used to assess qualitative data. Students' opinions were classified under three themes. These themes were "roles of a pediatric nurse", "pediatric practice experiences and perceptions", and "career objectives". Findings of this research revealed that pediatric nursing course had positive effects on students' perception about pediatric nurse's roles. Positive and negative experiences with educators, child patients, their relatives and other health workers effected students' perceptions positiviley/negatively. Also most of the students stated that they did not want to work as a pediatric nurse after graduation. Students thought being a pediatric nurse was more difficult than the other departments. Reasons for unwillingness to be a pediatric nurse were difficulty to deal with children, needs more responsibility, an emotional burden and also because of the male gender factor. Finally, in order to provide the best learning environment for students; cooperation between the school staff and the clinical staff should be strengthened, training skills of educators should be improved, the number of trainers should be enhanced and the students should be supported in clinical learning environment.

**Keywords:** Clinical practice, pediatric nursing, nursing roles