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Navigating the AI frontier: policy insights for nursing education

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Keywords

Artificial intelligence , ChatGPT, Nursing education, Educational Technology

Abstract

Introduction/Background: The rapid integration of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in nursing education has created opportunities for innovation alongside challenges in policy development. This study explores the current landscape of AI policies within nursing programs across bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Using a purposeful sample of 30 programs selected based on top rankings, the research investigates how policies align with best practices, support ethical and equitable AI use, and address critical issues such as academic integrity and inclusivity.

Grounded in qualitative descriptive methodology (Sandelowski, 2010), the study employs qualitative content analysis (QCA) to analyze data collected from public-facing portals, direct program contacts, and informal back channels (Schreier, 2012). Key themes and patterns in policy structure, accessibility, and alignment with professional standards are identified. By leveraging principles of information power and triangulation, the research ensures methodological rigor while balancing feasibility (Tracey, 2020; Ritchie et al., 2013; Sandelowski, 2010).

Findings from this study offer actionable insights for educators and administrators, providing a framework for refining GenAI policies to enhance teaching practices, promote inclusivity, and support technology-driven learning environments. This research contributes to the evolving discourse on integrating AI in higher education and highlights the critical role of robust policy development in shaping the future of nursing education. The unique contribution of this study lies in its emphasis on the development of evidence-based, equitable, and ethical AI policy frameworks that are applicable across multiple levels of nursing education.

Research Question/Goal: To analyze the current landscape of AI policies in nursing education programs and identify key elements for ethical, inclusive, and effective policy development.

Methods: This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive methodology supported by qualitative content analysis (QCA). Data is gathered from public-facing portals, direct program contacts, and informal back channels such as listservs and social media groups. A purposeful sampling approach focuses on 30 top-ranked nursing programs across bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Reflexive journaling is employed to ensure transparency, and triangulation is used to enhance trustworthiness. The coding process follows Schreier's QCA framework, with codes developed and refined in iterative stages.

Impact/Effectiveness: By identifying best practices for AI policy development, this study provides a pathway for educators and administrators to improve academic integrity, promote inclusivity, and support equitable AI use in nursing education. The findings support evidence-based recommendations for policy refinement and alignment with professional standards. Key stakeholders who would benefit from this research include nursing program administrators, curriculum designers, educators, and policymakers. These audiences can leverage the study's insights to create more effective, transparent, and inclusive AI policies within their institutions.

Findings/Results: Preliminary findings suggest significant variation in the accessibility, clarity, and focus of AI policies across nursing education programs. Key policy themes include ethical use, academic integrity, and equitable access. By establishing patterns and identifying gaps, this study highlights opportunities for nursing programs to create more cohesive, transparent, and effective AI policies. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

This study underscores the importance of inclusive AI policy development in nursing education. Ensuring that AI tools are accessible to students from all backgrounds and addressing biases within AI-generated content are central to the recommendations made in this research. The findings support the creation of equitable and inclusive AI policies that promote fairness and reduce barriers to learning.

Possible Applications: The results of this study offer practical guidance for administrators, educators, and policymakers. Nursing programs can use the findings to create or refine AI policies that support student learning, uphold academic integrity, and promote inclusivity. The frameworks and principles identified in this study are also applicable to other health education programs facing similar challenges with AI integration.

Measurable Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this Snap Talk, attendees will be able to:

1. Analyze existing AI policies in nursing education to identify elements that promote ethical AI use and academic integrity.
2. Differentiate between effective and ineffective AI policy elements in nursing education programs.
3. Apply evidence-based best practices for developing AI policy frameworks in nursing education, such as establishing clear guidelines for ethical AI use and promoting inclusive access to AI tools.

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