



*Original article*

## Prevalence and Factors Contributed to Absenteeism among Nursing Students at Faculty of Nursing Sciences, University of Khartoum –Sudan

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Student absenteeism is a major concern for university education worldwide. Despite the strict rules, Absenteeism is an ongoing problem in universities. Absenteeism refers to a situation when a student does not attend lectures, practice or any education activities. **Objective:** The overall objective of the study was to estimate prevalence and factors that contribute to absenteeism among Nursing Student at Faculty of Nursing Sciences University of Khartoum –Sudan, 2011-2013. **Methods:** The study had a descriptive cross-sectional design. The study included all regular undergraduate students who were enrolled in the university for at least one semester. A systematic, probability proportion to size sampling design were used and randomly 344students were recruited from568 students. One fifth were male and the rest were females. Data were obtained from participants by pre tested structured interview. **Results** Prevalence of absenteeism among nursing students was 29.4%. Male students were more prevalence than female, 41.1%and 26.5% respectively. Students perception towards related factors were reported as student factors( 58%) ,family(62.3%),social(71%),study(74%)an financial(82.3%) .All together leading to 70% of students' absenteeism .More common time for female students' absenteeism were at pre menstrual period. The study reveal that: there were significant correlation between residence and time of absenteeism. **Conclusion:** Problem of absenteeism is quite prevalent among the Nursing students; the problem is multi factorial.

**KEYWORDS:** Absenteeism, Factors Contribute, Nursing Students, Prevalence.

### INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism refers to a situation when a student not attended lectures, practice or any education activities. Regular class attendance is related to a student's commitment for education. Courses such as nursing require high attendance, where students are expected to be exposed to necessary information, abilities and attitudes required, has always been considered as a crucial element in attaining success [1].

Professional courses such as nursing require high attendance, because their whole performance is dependent on the knowledge and skills they gain during their education [2]. Literature still suggests that the reasons for poor attendance are neither well researched nor easy to determine as it is a complex and sensitive issue [3]. Students who miss the class frequently their learning level decreases and it becomes difficult to reach desired academic goals [4 ].

Regular school attendance is an essential part of the learning process. Student absenteeism appears to have a direct connection to decreased academic performance [5].

University of Khartoum have strict rules and regulation about absenteeism but still exist as mention by Hunter Concerning absenteeism University have explicit policies regarding mandatory attendance during lecture, laboratory and practical sessions. Despite the strict rules, absenteeism is an on-going problem; it is phenomenon that is also on the rise in universities worldwide [3,5 ].

Objective of the study was to estimate Prevalence and determine Factors contributed to Absenteeism among Nursing Student at Faculty of Nursing Sciences University of Khartoum –academic year, 2011-2013

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study on class attendance of undergraduate students at faculty of nursing Sciences University of Khartoum. Include all nursing students of faculty of nursing sciences who were registered in academic year 2011-2012 for at least one semester in the faculty (568 students).

**Sampling:** Based on a pilot study (n=30) Sample size was calculated, used the following formula  $n = (z^2pq/d^2) \times 2$ . THEN  $n = (1.96)^2 (0.325) / (0.07)^2 = 172$  (to decrease design effect when using probability proportion to size).

Sample design: Students in each class were listed alphabetically then systemic random sampled was used to

recruit the population units from each class. as follow first level was 94 second level was 101 third level was 78 and fourth level was 71 . Statistical analysis was used.

Ethical Considerations: Consent was obtained and confidentiality, ethics was censured by using codes for all participants and their names were concealed.

## RESULTS

The present study was performed to estimate prevalence of absenteeism among nursing students which was 29.4%, more than half of the students coming from neighbor Khartoum state places (Table1). Male students were more prevalence than female, 41.1% and 26.5% respectively (Table2).

**Table 1: Showing Prevalence and Socio demographic characteristic of the participants**

1	Sex		Male		Female	
			frequency	%	Frequency	%
			68	19.8	276	80.2
2	Residence					
	Khartoum state		Neighbor Khartoum state		Far places	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	frequency	%
	<b>52</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>206</b>	60	<b>86</b>	<b>25</b>
3					frequency	%
	Prevalence of absenteeism among students				101	29.4
	Prevalence of absenteeism among male students				28	41.1
	Prevalence of absenteeism among female students				81	26.5

**Table 2: Showing Comparison of Prevalence of absenteeism Between Male and Female students**

	%	t	Df	Sig
absenteeism among Male	41.2	23.141	66	.000
absenteeism among Female	26.5			

Factors contributed to absenteeism among students were reported as student related factors (58%) which represent the least factor to absenteeism compare to others factors, weakness of motivation, low ambition of the student, poor health conditions and under estimation of the college the most common students related items as student related factors (Table3). Followed by family related factors which represent (62.3%), poor follow up of parents to their sons

represent the most common item that leading to absenteeism but family disintegration, lack of punishment or over punishment, care less of the parents towards the future of their sons, conflicts among family members and students occupied more with family demand each represents approximately 60% of family related factors for absenteeism (Table4).

**Table 3: Students related factors for absenteeism**

	Items	Strongly agree		agree		Disagree	
		frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
1	students occupied more with family demand	68	19.8	159	46.2	117	34.0
2	conflicts among family members	48	14.0	162	47.1	134	39.0
3	family disintegration	67	19.5	165	48.0	112	32.6
4	care less of the parents towards the future of their sons	59	17.2	125	36.3	160	46.5
5	poor cultural level of the family	64	18.6	120	34.9	160	46.5
6	lack of punishment or over punishment	71	20.6	143	41.6	130	37.8
7	poor follow up of parents to their sons	109	31.7	139	40.4	96	27.9
	Mean for Strongly agree + agree	62.3 %					

**Table 4: Showing Family related factors for absenteeism**

	Items	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree	
		frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
1	weakness of motivation among some students	114	33.1	145	42.2	85	24.7
2	poor health conditions among some students	111	32.3	177	51.5	56	16.3
3	low ambition of the student	118	34.3	120	34.9	106	30.8
4	poor self confidence	51	14.8	98	28.5	195	56.7
5	shamefulness and hesitation toward others	37	10.8	101	29.4	206	59.9
6	low IQ level	24	7	62	18.0	258	75.0
7	under estimation of the college	106	30.8	113	32.8	125	36.3
8	intention to work more than to study	68	19.8	151	43.9	125	36.3
	Mean for Strongly agree + agree	58%					

**Table5: Showing Social factors related to absenteeism**

	Items	Strongly agree		agree		Disagree	
		Frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
1	Early marriage of the female students	119	34.6	110	32.0	115	33.4
2	Increased social obligations among families	59	17.2	114	33.1	171	49.7
3	Absence of dialogue between the parents and their sons towards their problems	74	21.5	172	50.0	98	28.5

4	poor relation between the faculty and the families of the students	132	38.4	106	30.8	106	30.8
5	Students not helped to get benefit of their spare time	161	46.8	121	35.2	62	18.0
6	Students not received enough advices	122	35.5	126	36.6	96	27.9
7	bad and worse friendship	178	51.7	116	33.7	50	14.5
Total mean for Strongly agree + agree		71%					

Social related factors increase the chance of absenteeism and represent (71%), bad and worse friendship, Absence of dialogue between the parents and their sons towards their education problems, Students not helped to get benefit of their spare time, poor relation between the faculty and the families of the students and Students not received enough advices together can play great role in this phenomena but

social obligations among families has no role in students absenteeism (Table5). Study related factors represent (74%) Admission of the student to nursing without their will, difficulty in understanding some subjects but fear of examination and Increase numbers of the students have no great role (Table6)

**Table6: Showing Study Related Factors to Absenteeism**

	Items	Strongly agree		agree		Disagree	
		Frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
1	Admission of the student to the nursing without his will	177	51.5	100	29.1	67	19.5
2	Fear of examination	104	30.2	118	34.3	122	35.5
3	Difficulty in understanding some subjects	116	33.7	160	46.5	68	19.8
4	Increase numbers of the students	95	27.6	84	24.4	165	48.0
5	poor guidance and instructions in the faculty	154	44.8	137	39.8	53	15.4
6	No regular daily discussion and revision of their lessons	144	41.9	137	39.8	63	18.3
Total mean for Strongly agree + agree		74%					

**Table7: Showing Financial related factors to absenteeism**

	Items	Strongly agree-1		Agree-2		Disagree-3	
		Frequency	%	frequency	%	frequency	%
1	Some students occupied by things other than studying	127	36.9	165	48.0	52	15.1
2	Poor financial level of some students	165	48	132	38.4	47	13.7
3	High study fees	191	55.5	109	31.7	44	12.8
4	Expenses of transport increased	191	55.5	90	26.2	63	18.3
5	Living far from the faculty	187	54.4	94	27.3	63	18.3

6	Student received few pocket money daily	155	45.1	115	33.4	74	21.5
7	Decreased motivation of student from rich family towards study	149	43.3	111	32.3	84	24.4
	Total mean for Strongly agree + agree	82.3%					

**Table 8: Occurrence of Absenteeism among Students**

		Frequency	%
1	Absent in morning lectures	151	43.9
2	Absent in afternoon lectures	127	36.9
3	Absent at beginning of academic years	123	35.8
4	Absent at pre –exams	121	35.2
5	Absent at pre menstrual period ( for female )	130	47
6	Absent at beginning of the week	63	18.3
7	Absent at the end of the week	137	39.8

Financial related factors represent (82.3%) which was dominant one, mainly related to Poor financial level of some students, High study fees, Expenses of transport and some Students received few pocket money daily (Table 7). Common reasons for Absenteeism were pre menstrual

period, menstrual problems, morning lectures and at the end of the week. (Table 8). Absenteeism, depending on the socio-demographic there was significant correlation between residence and week end absenteeism ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 9). Transport and morning absenteeism ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 9).

**Table 9: Correlations between transport and morning absenteeism and residence and week end absenteeism**

Living far from the faculty	Absent at the end of the week		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig.	0.045
Expenses of transport increased	Absent in morning lectures		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig.	0.049

## DISCUSSION

Many reasons may lead to absenteeism as, lack of interest in subject, Poor teaching strategies by lecturers, un favorable learning environment, too much socialization, Part time jobs, Poor relationships with the lecturers, illness, family commitment, teachers, topics and poor clinical environment [6]. So many factors cause absenteeism among the University Students as follows:

1-Student centered factors: Lack of interest in school or college subjects for. Preparation for examination. Peer influence.

2-Family related factors includes: Over expectations of parents. Lack of parental care.

3- Faculty related factors consist of: The poor teaching skills of lecturers leading to boring lectures. Lecturers not turning up for scheduled lectures. Excessive home work and project work for students. Clashes of courses on the time table.

4-Social related factors consist of: Low societal value for education. Inclement weather. 5- Financial: Transportation problems. Part time jobs or other work related commitments.[7]. The prevalence of absenteeism was

29.4%. The pattern of absenteeism revealed that a higher proportion of male students were absent than female students 41.2 and 26.5 respectively. Same as what mentioned by study conducted in King Khalid University and study by Kottasz, [10,11].

47% of female students were absent during the premenstrual period which was more to what found in Iran study that reveal 25% of participants missed the classes and examinations leading to decline in education [12] and also address by the study. Dysmenorrhea and premenstrual symptoms were serious enough to affect daily activities or academic attendance in many cases in Lebanon [13].

The usual time of absence was during the morning and end of the week respectively with primary cause of student absenteeism was transport [Table 7], which agreed with the study of Common factors Associated With Absenteeism that high light the same problem of traffic [14] And as the study conducted in King Khalid University which reveal that morning is the usual time of absenteeism but primary cause of student absenteeism was over-sleeping followed by pre-examination period. The primary major causes were studying or socializing with friends [10].

This study has shown that, the problem of absenteeism was caused by the interaction of a multiplicity of factors namely: Financial, study, social, family and students (82.3,74.71,62.3 and 56) respectively, which was differed to what revealed by the study conducted in Barbados and Nigeria on factors contributed to absenteeism, student-centred, home, school and society related reasons respectively [15]. Other stated that personal and social was responsible for absenteeism [16]. Other stated that personal and social was responsible for absenteeism [15]. Other mention student illness, dental and medical appointments, family commitments and faculty impending assignment submissions. Other factors that might influence college related factor included a dislike of certain subjects. [17].

## CONCLUSION

Problem of absenteeism was quite prevalent in faculty of nursing sciences. The problem was precipitated by interplay of multiplicity of factors which are both internal and external to the student and or the university.

## RECOMMENDATION

Education program for management of menstrual problems can help to alleviate the disturbing symptoms and decrease the chance of absenteeism. Further studies are required to assess the impact of absenteeism on students performance.

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