Exploring changes in nursing students' attitudes towards the use of technology: A four-wave longitudinal panel study

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Abstract: Background: It is essential for nursing students to be equipped with the necessary technology skills throughout and after their study period. Their acceptance of this technology depends largely on their attitudes towards technology. Objectives: To explore the evolution in nursing students' attitudes towards technology, and to determine whether there was a change in participants' formal education in technology over their four years of study. Methods: A longitudinal panel study was conducted in a single school of nursing in Jordan. A total of 140 students were followed over their four years of undergraduate study. They completed the same tool (the Technology Attitude Scale) each year, to capture any changes in their attitudes towards technology across the years. Results: In all four waves of data collection, students showed positive attitudes towards technology, with the highest attitude scores being in their final year (M=6.19, SD=0.72). As the students spent more time on their nursing education, they were found to have a more positive attitude. Thus, a strong positive relationship existed between this formal education in technology and attitudes: as the students' education in technology increased, their attitudes were more positive. Conclusion: A remarkable development in students' attitudes towards technology is reported in this study. The positive attitudes displayed by the students should be enhanced by providing technology-related subjects during their studies in nursing schools at a very early stage.