

Examining the Attitudes of University Students in the Health Sciences toward Disability

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Aim: The aim of this study, conducted under the sponsorship of the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies within the scope of the “Program for Supporting the Disabled” and titled “The Butterfly effect: Add a touch of your own,” was to improve the attitudes toward the disabled of Faculty of Health Sciences students who have a high potential of working with the disabled after graduation. Descriptive data for the study are presented here.

Materials and Method: The study encompassed 906 students enrolled in our Faculty in the 2015-2016 academic year. Our measurement instruments were the “Sociodemographic Data Form” and the “Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons” (*ATDP*) developed by Kaner et al. (2009) The *ATDP* consists of the subscales of educational environment, interpersonal relations, work life, family life, personal characteristics and competence-independent living. Each subscale domain measures the student’s desires to interact with disabled persons. The higher scores represent a positive attitude.

Results: Of the students, 75.9% (688) were females, 24.1% (218) were males. It was found that the female students’ *ATDP* mean scores were higher than the male students’ scores ($p<0.01$). Statistically significant differences were found in the *ATDP* scores in terms of the students’ departments ($p<0.01$) and their classes ($p<0.05$). It was observed that these differences stemmed from the scores of the students in their 1st and 4th years and 2nd and 3rd years. In the subscales, it was seen that there were significant differences in the mean scores of the students in the domains of educational environment, interpersonal relations, work life, personal characteristics and competence-independent living ($p<0.01$). The differences stemmed from the mean scores of the students in the Child Development and Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Departments.

Conclusions: Studies may be carried out to improve the attitudes of students whose *ATDP* mean scores are low, namely, male students and students studying nursing, health management, nutrition and dietetics. It may be appropriate to schedule lessons aimed for this purpose so that they are made available over the entire course of the educational program.

Keywords: Disability, Attitudes toward the Disabled, University Students

Biography:

Dr. Elif AŞIK is a lecturer in the Kırıkkale University, Turkey. She graduated from doctorate program of Marmara University’s Mental Health Nursing Department. She interested in schizophrenics, disability people and art therapy along the education life. She has reports and articles about these subjects.