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Trends and research issues of mobile learning studies in nursing education: a review of academic publications from 1971 to 2016

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Abstract

In the past decades, the issues related to mobile learning have been widely discussed around the globe; however, the development and trends of applying mobile technologies in nursing education still lack systematic analysis. In this study, a meta review of the studies published in academic journals from 1971 to 2016 was conducted to analyze the application domains, subjects, adopted learning strategies, investigated research issues and findings of mobile technology-supported nursing education. From the review results, it was found that the use of mobile technologies in nursing education and training have made great progress in the past decades. In addition to the changes in mobile technologies and the increasing number of mobile learning studies in nursing education, the subjects and research issues have also become more diverse in recent years. It was also found that mobile learning has mainly been applied to the training of basic nursing concepts and skills as well as to long-term care and obstetrics and gynecology, while few or even no studies are related to other nursing education domains. In addition, several widely adopted mobile learning strategies, such as inquiry-based learning, contextual mobile learning, synchronous sharing, Mindtools, project-based learning and peer assessment, have seldom been adopted in mobile nursing education. This also reflects the fact that most of these studies focused on skills training and basic knowledge comprehension, while few were conducted in the domains aimed at fostering learners' higher order thinking competences, such as problem solving or critical thinking. On the other hand, it was found that the number of studies using an experimental design has increased in recent years; moreover, most studies reported the learners' cognitive performance and perceptions, while their learning behaviors were seldom analyzed. Accordingly, the research trends and potential research issues of mobile nursing education are proposed as a reference for researchers, instructors and policy makers.

Keywords: Applications in subject areas; Interactive learning environments; Pedagogical issues;

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