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Essentials of genetic and genomic nursing: competencies and curricula guidelines

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Across all populations and areas of healthcare, there are opportunities for applications of genetics and genomics. It is crucial that nurses obtain and maintain a solid foundation in genetics and genomics to provide safe and competent care. Attempts have been made to incorporate genetic and genomic content in the educational curriculum of nursing students. Published by the American Nurses Association in 2006, the Essentials of Genetic and Genomic Nursing Competencies and Curricula Guidelines were established by consensus panel to define essential genetic and genomic competencies for all nurses regardless of level of academic preparation, practice setting or specialty. The second edition, Outcome Indicators Established by Consensus, was published in June 2008 and incorporated outcome indicators, specific areas of knowledge, and clinical performance indicators. A Consensus Panel was also used to establish The Essential Genetic and Genomic Competencies for Nurses with Graduate Degrees to define essential genetic and genomic competencies for all graduate nurses regardless of level of academic preparation, practice setting or specialty and addressed the following: risk assessment, genetic education, counselling, testing and results interpretation, clinical management, ethical legal and social issues, professional role, leadership, and research. Educational institutions and programs must prepare nurses with content regarding the genetic basis of disease and clinical applications such as pharmacogenetics. There are a variety of methods to incorporate genetic and genomic content such as developing individual courses, incorporating genetic/genomic material in established curricula, and utilizing clinical practice sites with a genetic population.

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