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Factors Contributing To Academic Dishonesty among Nursing Students at Kenya Medical Training Colleges, Kenya

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Globally, over 80 % (6.8 millions) of college students believe dishonesty in academics is a necessity to excel. On average, 70% of students confessed to having engaged in different forms of academic dishonesty. In Sub Saharan Africa approximately 50% (4.1 millions) students were involved in acts of academic dishonesty. In Kenya about 50% (70234) academic dishonesty occurs in most colleges in the Kenya Medical Training College with various forms being reported in the year 2012 and specific to western region, about 50% (20,243) of students in higher institutions of learning admitted to have engaged in different forms of academic dishonesty. A report by Kenya Medical Training College for the year 2015/2016 revealed an upsurge in academic dishonesty in most colleges nationwide. Contrary to the fact that Student are expected to be honest in their training as their future career revolved around taking care of people. Specific to Western region in Kenya, there has been limited documentation on academic dishonesty. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating academic dishonesty among nursing students in Kenya Medical Training Colleges in Western Kenya to specifically identify prevalence, factors contributing to academic dishonesty and strategies to prevent the same. Three Kenya Medical Training college campuses were selected purposively, mainly, Bungoma in Bungoma County, Webuye in Bungoma County and Kakamega in Kakamega County. Across sectional analytical Study design was employed. A sample of 222 students and 12 key informants were included in the study. Systematic random sampling was used for selection of students. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from students, Interview schedules used to collect data from Key Informants. Collected data was entered in the SPSS Version 21.0 and data analysed by descriptive statistics using percentages and means and inferential statistics of odds ratio used to test strength of association and 0.05 set as p value used to test the hypothesis in academic dishonesty. The response rate was (90.1%) n=202. The study findings revealed that out of 202, (47%) n=95 agreed to have been involved in some form of academic dishonesty; Most students, (40.1%), n=81 confessed to have received information on academic honesty through students' hand book. The results revealed examination cheating as the main form of academic dishonesty (71.6%) n=145. The main contributing factor to academic dishonesty was lack of lecturers adhering to policies in administration of examinations and overcrowding (OR: 2.3; 95% CI: 1.2-4.5; p=0.01), students not aware of college rules (OR: 0.6; 95% CI: 0.3-1.0; p=0.07) followed by family pressure to score high 47.8% (n=97). Students reported that punishment, remedial teaching and ant plagiarism software detection strategies were explained to them at the beginning of the training (OR: 1.4; 95% CI: 0.7-2.7; p=0.03). Consequences for academic dishonesty differed from college to college (OR: 1.9; 95% CI: 0.9-4.0; p=0.04). The most employed strategy for addressing

academic dishonesty was use of punishment. In conclusion, the study revealed that academic dishonesty was prevalent in the three colleges with cheating as the commonest form. Punishment was the commonest of all strategies used to deter students' involvement in academic dishonesty. This study therefore recommends that lecturers should adhere to college policies particularly during invigilation of examinations and provision of enough spacing during examination to reduce examination malpractices and more current strategies like software plagiarism detection to be employed by the college administration in curbing academic dishonesty.