



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

## *News Release*

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### **Care experience does not make students better nurses, study shows**

Nursing students with previous caring experience are less likely to perform better academically and clinically than those who have none, research shows.

A study assessing the criteria for selecting nursing students found that high emotional intelligence did not mean students performed better on their courses.

Researchers also found that of the students who have withdrawn from their studies, nearly 60 per cent had previous caring experience.

The ongoing study, led by the University of Edinburgh, is tracking performance and emotional intelligence - the ability to recognise your own and other people's feelings and act accordingly - of nearly 900 nursing and midwifery students from the University of the West of Scotland and Edinburgh Napier University.

Researchers found, however, that performance improved with age and that female trainees scored significantly better than male counterparts.

The findings come after the 2013 Frances Report - which highlighted care failings at the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust - recommended an emphasis on creating a more compassionate and empathetic culture in nursing.

As a result, aspiring nurses in England could potentially be required to spend a placement year as a carer before undertaking their training.

Lead researcher Rosie Stenhouse, lecturer in Nursing Studies at the University of Edinburgh, said: "The research should sound a note of caution to such pilot schemes. They are potentially expensive, politically motivated and not backed up by evidence."

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