Research Paper | Medical Science

# Critical thinking skills among nurses of a selected hospital A cross-sectional survey

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**ABSTRACT**

*Critical thinking is a pervasive skill that involves scrutinizing, differentiating, and appraising information and reflecting on the information gained in order to make judgments and inform clinical decisions. "A descriptive study to assess the critical thinking skills among nurses of a selected hospital in Thiruvananthapuram". The purpose of this study was to examine the level of critical thinking skills among staff nurses in selected hospital, Thiruvananthapuram. The main objectives of this study were: to assess the critical thinking skills of nurses and to determine the association between critical thinking skills and selected socio- demographic variables. This study was conducted at Sree Gokulam Medical College, Venjaramoodu, Thiruvananthapuram. The participants in this descriptive study were selected from the staff nurses working in different areas of selected hospital. A Nurses Critical Thinking Assessment Performa were used among 150 nursing staff after conducting a pilot study among 40 nursing staff of the same hospital. The result revealed that 8% of nurses had good level of critical thinking skill , 77.3% of nurses had average level of critical thinking skill and 14.7% of nurses had poor level of critical thinking skill. There is no association between critical thinking skill and socio demographic variables*

**KEYWORDS : critical thinking skill, staff nurses, descriptive study**

## 1. Introduction

Health care organizations have made dramatic advances and transformations during the last few decades, resulting in rapid growth of technology and theory. Some of the changes facing nursing today are an expansion in technology, consumer demand for quality care, pressure for cost containment, decreased length of stay in hospitals, an aging population, complex disease processes and increased patient acuity. One area in which critical thinking has gained particular attention is within Quality Improvement. Nurses are accountable on a daily basis for the quality of care provided to their patients. As such, nurses utilize critical thinking abilities to guide quality improvement initiatives effectively by coaching staff and/or their peers in a variety of ways so as to improve patient care.

Critical thinking (CT) skills and the inclination to engage in critical thinking are essential for nurse managers to function as transformational leaders capable of influencing staff to align with organizational goals. The need for critical thinking in nursing has been accentuated in response to the rapidly changing health care environment. Nurses must think critically to provide effective care while coping with the expansion in role associated with the complexities of current healthcare systems. Critical thinking is a set of skills which are used to process information, generate beliefs and then to make decision. Nurses use critical thinking skills every day to assess, plan for and provide quality of patient care. (Bambini, wash burn, and parkin, 2009 )

According to Lowenstein and Bradshaw(2001),critical based learning engages nurses in analytic dialogue about nursing situations by helping learners, analyze and authentize care to identify client problems, compose and evaluate optional situations, and decide how to deal with clinical situations

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

"A descriptive study to assess the critical thinking skills among nurses of a selected hospital in Thiruvananthapuram."

### 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are to;
- To assess the critical thinking skills of nurses.
- To determine the association between critical thinking skills and selected socio- demographic variables.

### 1.3 Assumption

1. Staff nurse may have adequate critical thinking skills.
2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1 Research design

In this study the researcher used a quantitative approach and non experimental descriptive design. The setting of he study was Sree Gokulam Medical College and Hospital, Venjaramoodu Trivandrum. The population of the study was registered nurses who are working in hospital. Subjects were staff nurses who are working in the hospital and those who satisfy the inclusion criteria.Sample size was 150 staff nurses who are working in selected hospital.

### 2.2 Tools and Technique

The tool consists of following section.

### 2.2.1 Section 1: Demographic Performa

The tool consisted of total 6 items such as age, sex, marital status, education and year of experience and area of working.

### 2.2 Section 2: Nurses Critical thinking Assessment Performa.

The critical thinking assessment questionnaire includes a total of 30 items, which includes questions from Psychiatrics, Pediatrics, Medical Surgical including Community, OBG Nursing.

### 2.3 Data collection process

To conduct research study in selected hospital formal permission was obtained from the hospital authority and the ethical committee. After obtaining individual consent from the nursing staff, nurse's critical thinking assessment Performa along with sociodemographic performa were given and explained all the scoring and rating of critical thinking skills of the nursing staff.

### Results

### 3.1 Section – 1: Description of sample characteristics

The major findings of the study were: the data showed that half of the staff (50.7) were between 25-29 years old, 39.3% of staff in between age of 20-24 years old and only 10% of staff are have more than 30 years of age. The data revealed that majority (82.7%) of staff were females and remaining (17.3%) were males.The data showed that majority (60.7%) of staff were single and remaining (39.3%) were married. It reveals that 25.3% of staff are have 2-3 year of experience,23.3% of staff are have 0-1year of experience,22% of staff are have >4 year of experience, only 14.7% of staff are have 1-2 years and 3-4 years of experience respectively. The data shows that 55.3% of staff studied BSC nursing, 43.3%of staff are GNM and small percentage of staff (1.3%) are PB BSc nursing. The data showed that 14% of staff are from pay ward,39.4% of staff from general wards,37.4% of staff from ICUs,6.6% of staff from Casualty and 2.6% of staff from OT.

3.2 **Level of critical thinking skills among nurses.**
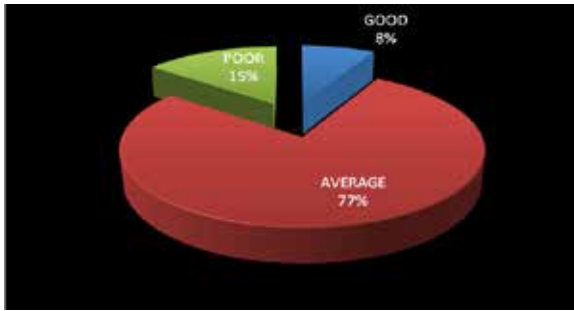


**Figure 1:**
The figure reveals that most of the staff (77%) have average critical thinking skills,15% of staff have poor critical thinking skills and only 8% of staff have good critical thinking skill capacity.

**3.3 Section-3: ssociation between critical thinking skills and selected socio- demographic variables**

| Sl.no | Sample characteristics | X value | df | Level of significance | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | age | 6.469 | 4 | 0.169(p>0.05) | No significance |
| 2 | sex | 1.583 | 2 | 0.453(p>0.05) | No significance |
| 3 | marital status | 0.209 | 2 | 0.901(p>0.05) | No significance |
| 4 | education | 6.958 | 4 | 0.138(p>0.05) | No significance |
| 5 | Years of experience | 10.935 | 8 | 0.205(p>0.05) | No significance |
| 6 | Area of working | 65.450 | 60 | 0.293(p>0.05) | No significance |

**Table 1:**
Chi-Square test showed that there is no significant association between any of the sociodemographic variables and the critical thinking skills.

**4. Discussion**
In the present study the result revealed that 8% of nurses had good level of critical thinking skill , 77.3% of nurses had average level of critical thinking skill and 14.7% of nurses had poor level of critical thinking skill. There is no association between critical thinking skill and socio demographic variables

A study done by Girot. E.A, University of the West of England, that evaluates the difference in development of critical thinking skills across four group of nurses at different stages of academic process and their perception of their decision making ability in practice. A quasi experimental, between subject design was used. Finally no relationship could be found between the development of critical thinking and decision making in practice, suggesting that more works needs to be done to look carefully at both critical thinking skills and decision making in practice.

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