



DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE TO WORK WITH OLDER PEOPLE AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS IN AL-NAMAS, KSA.

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: There is a proportionate increase in the health problems along with an increase in the elderly population in Saudi Arabia. Nurses need to be well prepared with knowledge and should have an optimistic attitude regarding elderly care.

AIM: The aims of this study is to assess the knowledge and attitudes towards the care of older people among the undergraduate nursing students in Al-namas, Saudi Arabia.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was carried out with the samples of 80 undergraduate nursing students. The knowledge questionnaire consists of 24 multiple-choice questions with one right answer. The attitude was assessed in a Likert's five-point scale, It consisted of 16 items. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant. **RESULTS:** The findings in this study thus illustrate that nursing students have, in general, relatively good knowledge in all the aspects of ageing. The result denotes that 60% of students have positive attitude and 40% of students have a negative attitude. There was significant in the knowledge and the demographic variables of sources of information ($P < 0.05$) and the students have old-age people at home ($P < 0.001$). There was no significance between knowledge level and other demographic variables. There was significant in the average attitude (p-value < 0.004) towards the care of elderly people between the students who have and not have the elderly people at home. None of other demographic variables have significant. In this study knowledge level was associated with students' attitudes. (p < 0.001).

Conclusions: The results of this study showed that good knowledge among the students and the positive attitude towards old-age people. The knowledge and attitude were positively correlated. This study is relevant as today's student nurses are tomorrow's registered nurses.

KEYWORDS : Knowledge, Old age, Attitude, Nursing, Students

INTRODUCTION

"Ageing is a privilege and a societal achievement. It is also a challenge, which will influence all aspects of society in the 21st century. It is a challenge that cannot be addressed by either the public or private sectors alone: it requires joint approaches and strategies"(WHO)

The ageing process is of path a biological reality, which has its own dynamic, mostly beyond human control. However, it also focuses to the constructions by which each society makes sense of old age. The world population is rapidly aging. Between 2000 and 2050, the quantity of the world's population above 60 years will twin from about 11% to 22%. The total number of people aged 60 years and above is anticipated to rise from 605 million to 2 billion over the same period.

In particular, Saudi older population over 60 is rising, and is expected to more than double by 2020. The number of older people be expected to grow from approximately 1 million (4 % of the population) to roughly 2.5 million (7 % of the population). This increase in numbers of older people present numerous challenges to the health care system in Saudi Arabia, and especially to the nurses who provide services to older clients with both acute and chronic conditions (Medical Health sector report, 2004). It is estimated that Saudi Arabia will require at least 25 years to prepare sufficient Saudi nurses to meet 30% of the Kingdom's nursing workforce requirements based on the current number of existing education places. (Abu-Zinada, 2006).

A descriptive survey conducted by Ryan and McCauley to determine the knowledge base and attitudes of junior and senior baccalaureate nursing students toward older adults. A sample of 55 students was surveyed using two instruments: Palmore's revised Facts on Ageing Quiz 1 (FAQ I) and Kogan's ATOP Scale. The results showed that neither group had a positive attitude towards older people and both lacked knowledge about ageing. The research found no significant difference between the groups in this area.

A study by Pursey and Luker explored the difference between nurses' attitudes towards work with older people generally, and their attitudes towards the individuals with whom they work. This study used 136 community nurses as a convenience sample, and the result identified that the nurses did not have negative attitudes towards

older individual, but they did not wish to work with older people collectively.

The researcher Happell and Brook raised the important question of 'Who will look after my grandmother?' in a review of attitudes of student nurses towards the care of older adults. The results of the study indicate that caring for older adults is considered the least popular area of practice for undergraduate nursing students due to negative views of working with older people. Much of the research to date has suggested that the lack of desire to work with older people among the students is due in part to negative attitudes toward older people themselves, and in part is due to the negative views of gerontological nursing as a career option. The influence of experience of older people is less clear.

Dellasega and Curriero carried out a longitudinal study with a sample of 39 nursing students, whose attitudes were tested prior to and at the end of a clinical work experience in an institutional setting with older adults, and later after more extended experience with older adults. Their results demonstrated that nursing students preferred not to work with older adults, no matter what type of older adult experience they had undergone.

The study by Walters concluded that negative attitudes amongst health care workers toward older people could affect both the quality services and the provision of health care. The study identified that health care workers with greater knowledge of ageing had more positive attitudes towards older people and showed that there can be a significant increase in knowledge and a significant reduction in negative attitudes following a continuing education programme.

A study by Fagerberget al evaluated gerontology education, and found that student nurses with backgrounds in theoretical and clinical education rather than geriatric and gerontology nursing showed a preference for working in emergency care rather than in geriatric care after graduation from college, and that there is a correlation between working experience and the reasons for studies for career choice.

Hoffman has examined the effect of caring for acutely ill older patients on a student nurses' attitudes. Kogan's ATOP scale was administered to 40 first semester nursing students at the beginning

of one semester and again at the end of that same semester, following completion of a clinical rotation involving the care of acutely ill older people. The study results showed that experiences where a student are exposed to acutely ill older patients early in the nursing programme might result in the development of negative attitudes.

However, in contrast, some studies have found that clinical experiences in nursing homes can lead to greater confidence and acceptance when working with older people (Lareau, 2000; Rowland and Shoemaker, 1995; Sheffler, 1998; Oglesby, 1992; Langland *et al*, 1986). Langland *et al* (1986) emphasized initial clinical experiences in nursing homes could positively influence attitudes towards older people among nursing students. The study examined 50 nursing students before and after nursing home experiences using Kogan's Attitudes Toward Old People Scale (Kogan, 1961). It was found that clinical experience with older people changed student's attitudes, which became more positive.

Lareau examined the change in students' attitudes toward older people following an initial clinical nursing experience in a nursing home at a community college. Again, the Kogan ATOP Scale was used to assess students' attitudes. A pre-test was administered at the beginning of the course, prior to the nursing home experience, and a post-test was completed during the last week of the clinical experience. Scores from both tests were evaluated using a paired t-test. The results revealed an increase in positive attitudes toward older people following an initial clinical experience in nursing home.

Kirkpatrick and Brown reported that there is an urgent need to integrate innovative teaching strategies in gerontological education due to increases in the number of older people. Similarly, Morris (2007) points out the importance of continued evaluation of nursing curricula and evidence-based teaching-learning strategies, which should be integrated into the Bachelor of Science in Nursing curriculum in relation to older people.

In summary, previous studies have painted a mixed picture, indicating that attitudes towards and knowledge of older people and gerontological nursing generally have both positive and negative elements but that attitudes towards older people and work with them may change, depending on the quality of education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

"Youth is like a fresh flower in May. Age is like a rainbow that follows the storms of life. Each has its own beauty."
David Polis.

The scope of nursing is encompassed of knowledge-based features possessed by persons involved in nursing care. This knowledge is achieved by; appraising ones attitudes, values, beliefs, culture related issues and the control of own making as an individual.

Globally, the ageing population is currently one of the main issues facing international health care system. However, since the student nurse of today is the health care provider of tomorrow, the attitudes of these baccalaureate students toward older patients is a vital concern. For that reason, the study of attitudes held by baccalaureate nursing students toward older people continues to be a major focus of concern for nursing in gerontology worldwide (Howeidi and Al Hassan, Hawk, Soderhamnet al., Brown, Sheffler, Kevin and Hope, Wilhite and Johnson). While, since the 1950s, studies have identified negative attitudes towards geriatric nursing among registered nurses and nursing students (Clare and Tulpule). The number of nurses interested in working with older people has decreased (Herdman, Soderhamnet al., Happell). In contrast, several studies in Taiwan have showed that nursing students hold positive

attitude toward older people (Wei, Liou and Hsu.).

Watson told that nursing organizations have a responsibility with regard to age: they have to be involved in the organization of care for older people in different care settings such as nursing homes, acute care and long-term care settings, and they need to understand the changes involved in the ageing process. The impact of these changes will be felt by the young nurses of the future, who will be faced with the challenging task of caring for this older population in a range of different care settings. This task may be affected by personal beliefs, attitudes, values, culture, experience or observations.

To throw more light on these problems the number of the studies in western counters such as the USA and the UK have proposed that nursing students tend to have positive attitudes toward older adults and toward the care of older people although some have found negative attitudes, which may affect the profession's ability to meet the growing demand for qualified nurses to care for older people. Moreover, their perceived attitudes toward the gerontology field might make it difficult to recruit the nurses required in this area.

Elderly care is the fulfillment of the different needs and requirements that are unique to senior citizens. This wide term encompasses such services as associated living, adult day care, long-term care, nursing homes, and hospice care and in home care. If nurses are able to take care of elderly patients without any difficult, they will be able to take care of any kind of patient in any situation. It will start from the basic curriculum itself. Therefore, it is essential to assess the knowledge and attitude of graduate nursing students regarding the importance of care of elderly people.

This study is relevant as today's student nurses are tomorrow's registered nurses and the manner in which they currently communicate with older person may indicate how they will interact with this population in the future. Therefore, investigator thought that it is an important study to assess student's knowledge and attitude towards importance of geriatric care.

AIM OF THE STUDY:

The aims of this study is to assess the knowledge and attitudes towards the care of older people among the undergraduate nursing students in Al-namas, Saudi Arabia.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the knowledge of student nurses regarding the importance of geriatric care.
2. To assess the attitude of student nurses towards geriatric care.
3. To find out the association between the knowledge and selected demographic variables.
4. To find out the association between the attitude and selected demographic variables.
5. To find out the association between the knowledge and attitude of the students towards the care of elderly people.

METHODOLOGY:

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was carried out at three academic levels of nursing students' knowledge and attitudes towards the care of older people at the Health Science College, Al-namas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In this study, the non-probability convenient sampling was used. The nursing students (n=80) studying the curriculum for a four-year program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.). Permission was obtained from the nursing college. The present study was conducted in this KKU, Al-namas campus for the three level students.

Research instruments: A pre validated self-administered

questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge and attitude of nursing students regarding elderly care. The instruments used in this study were the modified Facts on Ageing Quiz 2 (FAQ2), developed by Palmore in 1988 to examine health professionals' knowledge of ageing and modified Kogan Attitudes toward Old People Scale developed by Kogan in 1961 to measure attitudes toward older people.

DATA COLLECTION:

The developed tool was organized into three sections. They are as follows, Section I: Demographic variables of the students. Section II: The knowledge questionnaire consisted of 24 multiple-choice questions with one right answer. Section III: The attitude was assessed on a Likert's five-point scale, ranged from 'strongly agree' with five scores to 'strongly disagree' with one score. It consisted of 16 items. The total score was further categorized as positive and negative attitude as per the score obtained by the subjects.

PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS:

Data were collected and obtained from 80 students from three levels. The collected data will be summarized and tabulated by applying descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, standard deviation, correlation co-efficient, t'-test and Inferential statistics. A p-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The sample in this study was entirely made up of female participants. The original instruments used in this study were developed in western countries, and while the researcher used versions that had been modified to be compatible with the Saudi culture, some attitude items still might not have been easy to interpret in terms of the Saudi context.

RESULTS:

This chapter deals with results of data collected from a sample of 80 students regarding the care of elderly people by a semi-structured questionnaire.

Table 1: Distribution of Demographic variables among the students

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1. Age (in years)	24	30.0
a. 20-22	56	70.0
b. 23-24	-	-
c. 25-26	-	-
d. 27-28	-	-
2. What is your level of study?	4	5.0
A. 5 th level	12	15.0
B. 6 th level	64	80.0
C. 7 th level	-	-
3. What is your marital status?	64	80.0
A. Single	16	20.
B. Married	-	-
C. Divorced	-	-
4. How many children do you have?	76	95
A. None	4	5
B. One	-	-
C. Two	-	-
5. Are there any elderly people aged 60 or over living in your home?	30	37.5
A. Yes	50	62.5
B. No	-	-
6. Did you work with older people before starting your training?	14	17.5
A. yes	66	82.5
B. No	-	-
7. Do you currently work with older people outside of your training programme?	50	62.5
A. No	30	37.5
B. Yes	-	-

8. How often do you come in contact with people age 60 or over?	-	-
A. Daily	4	5.0
B. Twice a week	64	80.0
C. Weekly	12	15.0
D. Once a month	-	-
9. Have you cared for elderly persons in your nursing practice?	24	30.0
A. No	56	70.0
B. Yes	-	-
10. What is the source of this knowledge?	-	-
A. School	60	75.0
B. Nursing College	10	12.5
C. Family and friends	10	12.5
D. Media	-	-

TABLE :2Percentage distribution of knowledge on ageing among nursing students (n=80)

Sl. No	Questions	Correct Answer Frequency	Percentage
1	The life expectancy of a Saudi person	35	43.75
2	The life expectancy of a Saudi man	32	40.0
3	The proportion of elderly population	40	50.0
4	Elderly person's height	40	50.0
5	The elderly are limited in their activity	50	62.5
6	Lung capacity	45	56.25
7	Cardiac output and recovery time	58	72.5
8	Subcutaneous tissues	48	60.0
9	Sleep patterns	64	80
10	Home injuries	32	40.0
11	Elderly Saudi people live	60	75
12	Elderly workers	61	76.25
13	Elderly who reduce their activity	32	40
14	Criminal activity	40	50.0
15	Type of illness frequently	60	75.0
16	Dependency ratio	43	53.75
17	Memory	48	60
18	Fight infections	44	55
19	Bowel and bladder control	44	55.0
20	Changes in sensory organs	48	60.0
21	Voluntary participation	54	67.5
22	Fear of crime	48	60
23	Law abiding	41	51.25
24	Poverty level	45	56.25

TABLE: 2 Illustrate the overall scores on knowledge of students regarding different aspects of ageing on the Facts on Ageing Quiz and the mean numbers of correct answers. The possible mean scores were between 0 and 24. A higher score indicates a better knowledge on different aspects of ageing. The mean score on the quiz for students on the BSN program was 15.23 (57.92 %). According to Palmore (1977, 1988), on average, undergraduate students score 14 (56%). The findings in this study illustrate that nursing students have, in general good knowledge on the ageing.

Nursing students attitudes toward older people

TABLE: 3 Distribution of sample on overall level of attitude towards old-age people.

N=70

SCORE	ATTITUDE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
40-75	Positive attitude	42	60 %
Less than 40	Negative attitude	28	40 %

Table:3 denotes that out of 70 samples 60% of students have positive attitude and 40% of students have a negative attitude.

This study examined the attitudes of 80 nursing students (only 70 students were completed the scale) using the modified Kegan's Attitude toward Old People Scale and found that the average attitude score was 3.18, with a standard deviation of 0.29. The score indicates a favorable and positive attitude among Saudi nursing students toward older people.

Table: 4 Association of attitude with the demographic variable of having elderly people in their house

N=70					
Elderly at home	N	Mean	SD	t-test	p-value
Yes	30	83.07	13.04	2.96	0.004
No	40	74.63	10.82		

Table (4): The obtained Mean value was 83.07 with SD of 13.04 for the students have elderly people at home and for the students not having elderly people at home the obtained Mean value was 74.63 with SD of 10.82 which had that the t-value = 2.96 and the corresponding p-value < 0.004. Therefore, it was concluded that there was a significant difference in the average attitude towards care of elderly people between the students who have and not have the elderly people at home.

In associating the attitude with the other related demographic variables such as (age, level of study, marital status, number of children, etc..) had the p-values greater than 0.05. Hence, we concluded that there was no association between attitudes towards elderly people and various attributes.

Table 5: Association between Knowledge and Demographic variables (ANOVA Test)

N = 80				
Demographic Variables	Knowledge Score			ANOVA value
	No.	Mean	S.D	
Source of this knowledge?	-	-	-	F = 4.07,
A. School	60	91.11	6.45	P < 0.05 (Significant)
B. Nursing College	10	90.83	4.56	
C. Family and friends	10	99.17	1.86	
D. Media				
Elderly people aged 60 or over living in your home.	30	97.50	4.67	F = 30.19,
A. Yes	50	88.83	4.92	P < 0.001 (Significant)
B. No				

Table: 5 shows on sources of knowledge calculated ANOVA value is 4.07 and it is significant at the level of $P < 0.05$. Regarding having elderly people at home calculated value is 30.19 and it is significant at the level of $P < 0.001$

There was no significance between knowledge level and other demographic variables such as (age, level of study, marital status, number of children, etc..) had the p-values greater than 0.05.

DISCUSSION:

This chapter discusses the major findings of the study and reviews them in relation to findings from the results of other studies.

The findings in this study illustrate that the nursing students have, in general good knowledge of the ageing. The mean score on the quiz for students on the BSN program was 15.23 (57.92 %). According to Palmore (1977, 1988), on average, undergraduate students score 14 (56%).

These findings are supported by a study carried out to assess the knowledge of nursing students on care of old age in Orissa, India. The study result showed that the knowledge about care of old age among the students was the mean score on the quiz for students on the BSN program was 16.03 (59.02 %). According to Palmore (1977,

1988), on average, undergraduate students score 14 (56%).

This study examined the attitudes of 80 nursing students (only 70 students were completed the scale) using the modified Kegan's Attitude toward Old People Scale and found that the average attitude score was 3.18, with a standard deviation of 0.29. The score indicates a favorable and positive attitude among the nursing students toward older people.

These findings are supported by a number of earlier studies have discovered student nurses attitudes towards older people, and the results of this study support those that have found favorable attitudes among nursing students toward older people (Howeidi & Al Hassan, 2005; Zakari 2005; McKinlay & Cowan, 2003; Nolan et al., 2002).

However, this study suggests that Saudi nursing curricula should include more extensive gerontology content and clinical experience with older people in the community course in different settings. There will be a need for an increasing emphasis on rehabilitation and health maintenance rather than acute care, with a consequent need for an increased number of health care workers who are well educated in gerontology nursing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A similar study can be conducted for a large group of sample and in different settings.
- Comparative study can be conducted among the male and female students.
- A similar study can be conducted among the other paramedical students.
- The future research is needed to identify factors that seem to be crucial in forming positive attitudes toward older adults.

SUMMARY

This study, which investigated the knowledge and attitudes of undergraduates toward geriatric patients, among the nursing population. The key findings shows that the good knowledge and a positive attitude of the participants in the nursing college toward the elderly. However, the only need is to improve the knowledge and skills in the management of the elderly, so that the positive attitude can be utilized properly, to improve the quality of life of the elderly. It is also recommended that special attentions should be given to the knowledge and attitudes of nursing educators with stress on the importance of gerontological nursing education in nursing courses, with the focus on improving the attitudes of nursing students to gaining positive knowledge and clinical experiences in gerontological care. Geriatric nursing should be introduced as a separate subject for proper training of nursing students, to provide the elderly the quality of care, which they deserve. I hope to use the knowledge gained from exploring these perspectives to inform baccalaureate nursing curriculum development in gerontology and implement comprehensive health care delivery for the Saudi ageing population. Saudi health ministers, nursing educators, health care planners and administrators should work together to develop a gerontology program with more emphasis on clinical experiences with older people that will promote the training of Saudi students in the care of older people and enhance their knowledge of ageing to encourage them to work with older people in future in Saudi Arabia.

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