



ASSESSMENT OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE OF STAFF NURSES REGARDING PATIENTS RIGHTS AND FACTORS INTERFERING THE NURSES FROM PROTECTING THE PATIENTS RIGHTS IN MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL ALAPPUZHA

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ABSTRACT

The descriptive study was done to assess the knowledge and practice of staff nurses regarding patients rights and factors interfering the nurses from protecting the patients rights in medical college hospital Alappuzha. Sample was 150 staff nurses working in different units of the hospital. The data was collected using self administered questionnaire. The major findings were as follows Majority (66%) of the subjects had moderate knowledge about patients rights. Majority of the subjects (58%) reported that they protect their patients rights. Major factors reported by the staff nurses which interfere the nurses from protecting the patients rights are shortage of staff, turnover of staff, increased workload, lack of properly frame policies, increased number of patients and lack of support from the members of health team.

KEYWORDS : Nurses, Knowledge, Reported practice, Patients' rights

INTRODUCTION

Health is a subject closer to each individual's self. Today patient is viewed as an active member of health team rather than a passive recipient of care. Average citizen of today is much more knowledge able about the complicated mechanism of human body. He knows that he has the right to know the disease, the treatment he is being given, to have a say in his treatment and to be kept informed of his progress.

Nurses are much closer to the patients than doctors or any other health professional. They are the ones who are often directly deal with patients and are always nearby. Nurses have the obligation to protect the rights of patients and to use all means necessary to prevent any kind of violation of rights. The investigator during her clinical experience in various private & government hospitals found out that the patients rights are not being protected. Nurses being the key person in the patients care, has to know the patient rights and must see that the patients rights are being protected.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A descriptive study to assess the Knowledge And Practice Of Staff Nurses Regarding Patients Rights And Factors Interfering The Nurses From Protecting The Patients Rights in Medical college Hospital Alappuzha

OBJECTIVES

- (I) To determine the Knowledge of the Nurses regarding the Patients Rights
- (II) To determine the extent to which the rights of the patients are being protected as measured by the self reported practice.
- (III) To determine the Factors which interfere the Nurses from protecting the Patient Rights

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Studies on the extent of protection of patients rights and the nurses knowledge about patients rights were very less and is an area which has to be explored more.

A study to determine the knowledge level and attitudes of patient rights among the nurses of the Gülhane Military Medical Academy (GATA) Training Hospital was done (Abdul Kadir Tekke et al, 1996) and 120 nurses were chosen with simple random sampling for the study. In general, 41.1% of the study group didn't receive any education about patients' rights, 21.7% stated that they didn't encounter any patient rights issue in their day to day practice, and 64.2% stated that they learned something about the patient rights from another resource like TV or mass media.

A descriptive study was done (Kunjumon B, 2006) to assess the knowledge and practice of staff regarding patient rights in a

multispecialty hospital in Kerala. So trained nurses were selected using purposive sampling technique. A self administered questionnaire was administered in knowledge and reported practice regarding patients rights. The findings of the study revealed that nurses (56%) have moderate knowledge about patients rights. The mean knowledge score was 63 (SD+10). The mean practice score was 17 whereas the maximum score was 25. The study concluded that nurses should gain knowledge about the legal implications of the patients rights.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey design was used and 150 registered nurses working in different units which includes wards, ICUs, Operation theatres and other areas of Government Medical College, Alappuzha; were selected using simple random sampling. A self-administered questionnaire was used to elicit the information, which include four parts:

- 1) demographic performa
- 2) self administered questionnaire to assess the Knowledge of the Nurses on protecting Patient Rights (28 items)
- 3) self administered checklist to assess the practice of the Nurses in protecting patient rights (25 items), according to the patients Bill of Rights
- 4) a self administered questionnaire to assess the Factors that interferes the Nurses in protecting the patients. The data was collected after obtaining ethical clearance and informed consent.

RESULTS

Knowledge about Patient Rights

Majority (66%) of the subjects had moderate knowledge about patients rights. Most of the subjects (79%) reports that they know patients rights. Most of the subjects (78%) know their patients' right to get considerate and respectful care. 28% of the subjects do not know about patients' right to make decision about the care. Majority (66%) of the subjects know that the patient has the Right to refuse treatment/care. Most of the subjects (85%) know that their patient has the Right to receive reasonable continuity of quality care. Majority of the subjects (70%) know that the financial implication of the disease must be explained to the patient. Few subjects (33%) donot know that their patients has the Right to be informed of the realistic care options. Majority (65%) of the subjects do not know that their patient has the Right to know regarding his/her diagnosis, treatment and care. Most of the subjects (77%) do not know that their patient has the right to ask the identity of nurse. Most of the subjects (83%) do not know that their patient has the right to be informed of the consequences if he/she refuses the care. 18% of the subjects do not know that their patients has the right to be informed of the hospital policy and practices. Majority (66%) of the subjects do not know that their

patients has the Right to review the case sheet and to have the information explained as necessary. Majority (66%) of the subjects do not know that their patient has the Right to give advance directives like DNR. Most of the subjects (80%) know that their patient has the right to express their feelings and concerns. Most of the subjects (84%) know that care should be provided in a safe environment. 13% of the subjects do not know that their patients has the Right to follow their spiritual rituals unless it interfere with the treatment. Majority (61%) of the subjects know that their patients has the right to receive visitors unless it interfere with the treatment.

Reported Practice of Patients rights

Majority (58%) of the subjects reported that they are protecting their patients rights. Most of the subjects (75%) know that their patients has the right to communicate with others. Most of the subjects (88%) reported that they give considerate and respectful care to their patient. 20% of the subjects reported that they wont allow the patient to take decision regarding his care. Majority (88%) reported that they give continuity in providing care. Most of the subjects (70%) reported that they explain about the cost of treatment to the patient. Majority (70%) reported that they inform the realistic care options to their patients. Majority of the subjects (55%) reported that they inform their patient about his diagnosis and treatment. 22% of the subjects reported that they wont explain regarding the details of the procedure to their patient. Majority (60%) reported that they do not disclose their identity to the patient if he/she asks. Most of the subjects (81%) reported that they explain their patient about the hospital policies & practices. Most of the subjects (89%) reported that they wont give documents of patient if others asks and 34% reported that they give documents to their patient if he asks. Most (95%) reported that they take consent when the patient is posted for any major procedures or researches. Most of the subjects reported that they give continuity in providing care (83%), Majority of the subjects reported that they explain their patient about how to file a complaint (60%). Few subjects reported that they wont allow patient to give suggestions like do not resuscitate (22%). Most of the subjects reported that they provide care in safe and secure environment (84%),

Most of the subjects reported that they maintain privacy of patient while doing the procedure (98%), Most of the subjects reported that they allow patient to follow his religious practices (98%). Most of the subjects reported that they allow patient to receive visitors (84%). Most of the subjects reported that they allow patient to express their feelings and concerns (83%), Most of the subjects reported that they allow patient to communicate through mail/phone (64%).

Table 1 Factors interfering the staff nurses from protecting the patients rights

Sl No	Factors	n= 150			
		Present		Absent	
		F	%	F	%
1	Lack of knowledge about patients rights	41	36	89	59
2	Shortage of staff	124	83	26	17
3	Turnover of staff	97	65	53	35
4	Lack of experience of staff	98	65	52	35
5	Increased workload of staff	125	83	25	17
6	Lack of properly framed policies	115	77	35	23
7	Restrictions by rules	91	61	59	39
8	Lack of adequate supplies and equipments	117	78	33	22
9	Lack of support from other members of health team	119	79	31	21
10	Increased number of patients	118	79	32	21

Table 1 show that there are certain factors interfering the

nurses from protecting the patients rights which include lack of knowledge about patients rights (36%) shortage of staff (83%), turnover of staff (65%), lack of experience of staff (65%), increased workload of staff (83%), lack of properly framed policies (77%), restrictions by rules (61%), lack of adequate supplies and equipments (78%), lack of support from other members of health team (79%), increased number of patients (79%). Major factors reported by the staff nurses are shortage of staff, turnover of staff, Increase workload, lack of properly frame policies, increased number of patients and lack of support from the members of health team which interfere the nurses from protecting the patients rights.

DISCUSSION

Majority (66%) of the subjects had moderate knowledge about patients rights and majority (58%) of the subjects reported that they protect their patients rights. This is consistent with the findings of a study (Iltanen S, Leino-Kilpi H, Puukka P, Suhonen R, 1998) on knowledge about patients' rights among professionals in public health care in Finland. Healthcare professionals were partially familiar with patients' legal rights. The respondents lacked knowledge on the right to information and the right to use the services of patient ombudsman. Based on self-evaluation, half of the respondents thought that they had weak knowledge of the legislation on patients' rights.

Another study conducted by Abbass Sheikhtaheri, Monierh Sadequi and Zahira Hashmi in 2004 to evaluate the knowledge of 189 staff nurses who were working in the university teaching hospital in the city of Karaj also reported that the level of the participants' knowledge about patient rights as 22.38 percent.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Nurses and physicians must update their knowledge regarding patients rights so that they can protect their patients rights and they can prevent themselves from getting into legal issues. The nurses being the patient advocate, ensure that the patients rights are being protected.

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