Original Research Paper

Volume - 16 | Issue - 11 | November - 2026 | PRINT ISSN No. 2249 - 555X | DOI : 10.36106/ijar

Urology

A STUDY ON AWARENESS OF BENIGN PROSTATIC HYPERPLASIA AND ITS MANAGEMENT: THE NEED FOR IMPROVED PATIENT EDUCATION AND EARLY HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a common nonmalignant enlargement of the prostate gland associated with lower urinary tract symptoms, particularly among aging men. Although BPH is prevalent, inadequate awareness regarding its symptoms, complications, and management may contribute to delayed healthcare-seeking behavior and reduced quality of life. The present study aimed to assess awareness regarding BPH and its management among adult men attending outpatient services at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, India. A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research design was adopted. Data were collected from 100 adult men using a structured awareness questionnaire during November 6–26, 2014.The findings revealed that 79% of participants had poor awareness regarding BPH, while 21% demonstrated average awareness. None of the participants achieved a good awareness score. Furthermore, 95% reported having received no previous information regarding BPH. Lower urinary tract symptoms were common, including nocturia (51%) and increased urinary frequency (44%). Based on the identified knowledge gaps, an information booklet was developed to improve patient education regarding BPH, its symptoms, complications, and available management options.These findings highlight substantial gaps in prostate health literacy among the study population. The author's subsequent clinical observations have also suggested that limited understanding of prostate-related symptoms remains an important patient education concern, although these observations were not systematically studied. The study emphasizes the need for structured patient education, early symptom recognition, and healthcare professional involvement in promoting men's urological health.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Benign prostatic hyperplasia is a common urological condition affecting aging men. It is characterized by nonmalignant enlargement of the prostate gland and may be associated with lower urinary tract symptoms, including urinary frequency, nocturia, urgency, weak urinary stream, and incomplete bladder emptying.

Although BPH is not prostate cancer, its symptoms can significantly affect sleep, daily activities, psychological well-being, and overall quality of life. In some individuals, untreated bladder outlet obstruction may contribute to urinary retention and other complications.

Limited awareness regarding BPH may prevent individuals from recognizing symptoms and seeking timely medical evaluation. Some men may consider urinary difficulties a normal consequence of aging and may not recognize when medical assessment is necessary.

Patient education plays an essential role in improving health literacy and encouraging appropriate healthcare utilization. Nurses and advanced practice providers can contribute by assessing symptoms, explaining available management options, and addressing misconceptions.

The present study was conducted in 2014 at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, India, to assess awareness regarding BPH and its management among adult men. The findings were used to develop an educational information booklet.

The relevance of this topic extends beyond the original study setting. In contemporary clinical practice, awareness of prostate-related conditions remains an important component of men's preventive healthcare. However, current clinical observations should be distinguished from systematically collected research findings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess awareness regarding benign prostatic hyperplasia and its management among selected adult men.
2. To identify associations between awareness levels and selected demographic variables.
3. To develop an information booklet addressing identified knowledge deficits.
4. To discuss the implications of the findings for contemporary patient education and men's health promotion.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design: A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional design was used.

Study setting: Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, Kerala, India.

Study period: November 6–26, 2014.
Sample size: 100 adult men aged over 40 years.
Sampling technique: Non-probability convenience sampling.

Data collection instrument: A structured 24-item awareness questionnaire assessing knowledge of BPH, its symptoms, complications, and management.

The questionnaire had a maximum score of 24, with awareness categorized as follows:

Awareness level	Score
Poor	0–8
Average	9–16
Good	17–24

Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the findings. Associations with demographic variables were included among the original study objectives.

An educational information booklet was prepared following the awareness assessment. No post-intervention assessment was conducted; therefore, the effectiveness of the booklet was not statistically evaluated.

RESULTS

Table 1. Distribution of participants according to awareness level

Awareness level	Number (n=100)	Percentage
Poor	79	79%
Average	21	21%
Good	0	0%
Total	100	100%

The mean awareness score was 6.17 (SD = 3.075) out of a maximum possible score of 24. The highest observed score was 14.

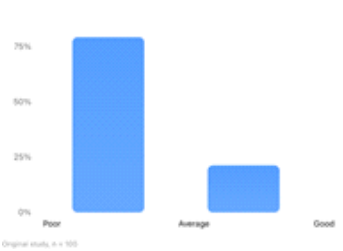


Figure 1. Awareness regarding BPH among study participants

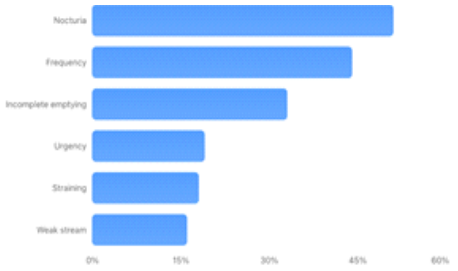
Table 2. Previous information regarding BPH

Previous information	Percentage
No previous information	95%
Had previous information	5%

Table 3. Reported lower urinary tract symptoms

Symptoms	Percentage
Nocturia	51%
Increased urinary frequency	44%
Incomplete bladder emptying	33%
Urgency	19%
Straining during urination	18%
Weak urinary stream	16%

Figure 2. Frequency of reported urinary symptoms



Participants could report more than one symptom; percentages are not mutually exclusive.

The findings demonstrated a substantial gap between the presence of urinary symptoms and participants' knowledge regarding BPH. Overall, 90% reported at least one lower urinary tract symptom, while 79% had poor awareness of BPH and its management.

DISCUSSION

The present study identified considerable deficiencies in awareness regarding BPH among adult men attending outpatient services in Kochi, India.

The finding that 79% of participants had poor awareness and 95% had received no previous information highlights the need for accessible and structured educational interventions.

The presence of nocturia, increased urinary frequency, and other lower urinary tract symptoms among participants further emphasizes the importance of patient education. Although these symptoms are not specific to BPH, they may warrant clinical evaluation depending on their severity, duration, and associated findings.

The study supports the importance of integrating prostate health education into routine clinical encounters, particularly among middle-aged and older men.

Relevance to contemporary clinical practice

The author's subsequent professional experience in nursing and advanced practice has provided additional opportunities to recognize the importance of patient education regarding urological symptoms and preventive healthcare.

In clinical encounters, patients may have limited understanding of prostate-related conditions or may regard urinary changes as a normal part of aging. Such observations are consistent with the educational concerns identified in the original study.

However, these contemporary observations were not obtained through a structured research protocol and cannot establish the prevalence of inadequate awareness among current patients.

The original findings remain relevant as a historical example of a substantial patient education gap and provide a rationale for future studies evaluating current awareness levels, health literacy, and educational interventions.

Implications for nursing practice

Nurses and nurse practitioners are well positioned to identify patients who may benefit from education about BPH and lower urinary tract symptoms.

Clinical education may include symptom recognition, lifestyle measures, available treatment options, and indications for medical assessment.

Standardized patient education materials and shared decision-making approaches may help improve understanding and support informed healthcare choices. Future studies should evaluate whether these approaches lead to measurable improvements in knowledge, appropriate healthcare-seeking behavior, and patient outcomes.

LIMITATIONS

The study was conducted at a single healthcare institution with a sample of 100 participants selected through convenience sampling. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all adult men in India or other populations.

The data were collected in November 2014 and may not reflect current awareness levels.

Although an information booklet was developed, no post-education assessment was performed. Consequently, improvement in knowledge or behavior following the intervention cannot be established.

Contemporary clinical observations discussed in this manuscript are contextual reflections rather than additional research data.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed substantial deficiencies in awareness regarding benign prostatic hyperplasia and its management among adult men attending outpatient services at Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi, India.

Among the 100 participants, 79% demonstrated poor awareness, 21% had average awareness, and none demonstrated good awareness. Additionally, 95% reported having received no previous information regarding BPH.

The findings indicate a need for improved patient education, greater awareness of lower urinary tract symptoms, and appropriate clinical evaluation.

The information booklet developed from the original findings represents a practical educational resource, although its effectiveness requires further evaluation.

Future research should assess current knowledge gaps and investigate whether structured educational interventions improve patient understanding, symptom reporting, healthcare-seeking behavior, and quality of life.

The following are relevant references to consider for the manuscript. The final bibliography should be checked against the original articles and the journal's required citation style.

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