



KNOWLEDGE REGARDING END OF LIFE CARE AMONG STAFF NURSES

Nursing

Mrs. Meenakshi Sekar

M.Sc. N., RN. RM., Professor, Medical Nursing, College of Nursing, CMC Vellore

Dr. Shirley David*

Ph. D., M.Sc. N., RN. RM., Professor & Head of the Department, Medical Nursing, College of Nursing, CMC Vellore. *Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

Nurses are required to become sensitive to, and knowledgeable about end of life care issues.

This study followed a descriptive research design, conducted among 98 staff nurses working in the medical nursing department of a tertiary care hospital of India. The aim was to assess the knowledge of the staff nurses. Total enumerative sampling technique was applied. Self administered knowledge questionnaire which had 24 questions was used as data collection tool. A score of above 75% was considered as adequate knowledge. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics (frequency & percentage) and inferential statistics (correlation coefficient & Chi Square). The findings revealed that most of the subjects (74.5%) had moderately adequate knowledge and 5.1% had adequate knowledge. No association was found between demographic variables and knowledge (p value >0.05). Periodical in service education on end of life care may improve the knowledge of staff nurses towards end of life care, which is crucial since the criticality of patients is increasing day by day, and nurses find themselves at the center of these difficult situations.

KEYWORDS

End of Life Care, Knowledge, Staff Nurses

Introduction

Nursing perspective of 'a good death' is centered in the ability to provide comfort to all involved. Meaningful death process is one during which the patient is physically, psychologically, spiritually, and emotionally supported by his or her family, friends and caregivers. Patients prefer Nurses for emotional support and rated them high with regard to having enough time, availability in urgent situations and accessibility (Pinzon et al., 2010).

A study addressing physicians' and nurses' perceptions of barriers to quality EOL care in ICUs documented that physicians had greater confidence in communication-based skills than did nurses, whereas nurses reported higher confidence in certain areas of symptom management (e.g., managing Opioids). Fifty one percent of nurses in that study indicated that, they were less prepared than physicians to discuss EOL care with patients/families (Montagnini M, 2012).

According to Beckstrand, Callister & Kirchhoff (2006), facilitating a good death is found to be one of the major challenges faced by the nurses, who were working with patients with terminal illness. Nurses identified a few barriers that interfered with good death including time constraints, poor staffing pattern, communication barriers, and physician centered treatment decisions.

Health care professionals valued symptom management (72.5%) and presence of family members during illness (67.5%) as crucial elements of end of life care (Chacko R., 2014).

The investigator found in her clinical area that, patients were critically ill and the number of deaths in the medical wards were extremely challenging to the staff. From April 2017- June 2017, 195 deaths had occurred. Nurses were constantly witnessing death and providing care for dying patients and their family members. Nurses also need to be prepared effectively to face this challenge in day to day practice. Hence, this study was being undertaken to get a grasp of the knowledge of staff nurses regarding end of life care with the following objectives.

1. To assess the knowledge of staff nurses regarding end of life care.
2. To determine the association between knowledge of staff nurses regarding end of life, with selected demographic variables.

Methods

Design and sampling

A descriptive research design adopted for the study. The study was

conducted among staff nurses working in the medical nursing department of a tertiary care hospital in India. Total enumerative sampling technique was used to recruit staff nurses from all three shifts. Staff Nurses who were working in the area for more than 3 months and who were willing to participate in the study were included as samples. Written informed consent was obtained and questionnaires were administered.

The instrument used for data collection was divided into following sections:

Part I – Demographic profile of the staff nurses included age, sex, marital status, educational status, religion, years of experience and experience of caring for dying patients.

Part II Knowledge questionnaire: Consisted of a structured questionnaire developed by City Of Hope Pain/Palliative Care Resource Center for Registered Nurses, which comprised of 24 questions with four options on the various aspects of end of life care. For every correct answer a score of one was awarded and for every incorrect answer a score of 0 was given. Knowledge scores of the subjects were converted into percentage. A score of above 75% was considered as adequate. A score of 50% - 75% was taken as moderately adequate and a score below 50% as inadequate.

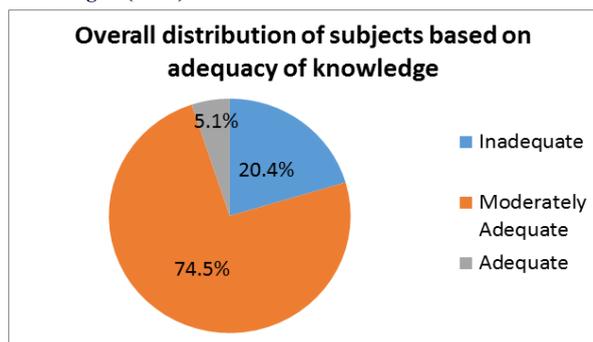
Ethical clearance was obtained from College of Nursing Research Review Board.

Results and discussion

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. A 'p' value of $<.05$ was considered to be statistically significant in this study. Descriptive statistics was used to present the frequency and percentage of the demographic variables. Chi-square test was used to find association between knowledge and demographic variables.

Demographic characteristics indicated that, majority of subjects were females (93.9%) and 66.3% of them had less than 5 years of experience. Among the subjects, 98% of them had previous experience in caring for patients at the end of life. Majority of them were Christians (72.4%) and most of them (86.7%) were Diploma nurses. More than half of them (52%) were unmarried. Those with less than 5 years of experience were 66.3%.

Staff Nurses level of knowledge regarding End of Life care
 Figure 1 . Overall distribution of subjects based on adequacy of knowledge (n=98)



Most of the staff nurses (74.5%) had moderately adequate knowledge.

Table 1. Distribution of subjects based on demographic variables and adequacy of knowledge

		(n=98)			
Variables		Inadequate n (%)	Moderately adequate n (%)	Adequate n (%)	
Gender	Male	1 (5)	4 (5.5)	1 (20)	
	Female	19 (95)	69 (94.5)	4 (80)	
Marital Status		10 (5)	33 (45.2)	3 (60)	
	Married				
	Unmarried	9 (5)	40 (54.8)	2 (40)	
	Separated	1 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	
Education		17 (85)	63 (86.3)	5 (100)	
	Diploma				
	Degree	3 (15)	10 (13.7)	0 (0)	
Religion		5 (25)	22 (30.1)	0 (0)	
	Hindu				
	Christian	15 (75)	51 (69.9)	5 (100)	
Previous Experience in EOL Care		2 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	
	No				
	Yes	18 (90)	72 (98.6)	5 (100)	
Age in Years		9 (45)	33 (45.2)	1 (20)	
	<25				
	26-30	5 (25)	22 (30.1)	3 (60)	
	30-35	3 (15)	12 (16.4)	1 (20)	
	35-40	3 (15)	4 (5.5)	0 (0)	
	>40	0 (0)	2 (2.7)	0 (0)	
Experience in Years		14 (70)	49 (67.1)	2 (40)	
	<5				
	5-10	5 (25)	17 (23.3)	3 (60)	
	11-15	1 (5)	6 (8.2)	0 (0)	
	>15	0 (0)	1 (1.4)	0 (0)	

Among 74.5% of the staff nurses who had moderately adequate knowledge, 94.5% of them were females, 54.8% of them were unmarried, 86.3% of them were Diploma nurses, 69.9% of them were Christians, 98.6% of them had previous experience in caring patients at their end of life, 45.2% of them were less than 25 years of age and 67.1% of them had less than 5 years of experience.

Kassa (2014) in her study at Ethiopia identified that among 341 palliative care nurses, 30.5% had good knowledge about palliative care.

Table 2. Association between knowledge of staff nurses and demographic variables

		(n=98)				
Variables		Inadequate n (%)	Moderately adequate n (%)	Adequate n (%)	Chi 2	p-Value
Gender	Male	1 (5)	4 (5.5)	1 (20)	1.77	0.412
	Female	19 (95)	69 (94.5)	4 (80)	17	
Marital Status		10 (50)	33 (45.2)	3 (60)	4.60	0.33
	Married					
	Unmarried	9 (45)	40 (54.8)	2 (40)		
	Separated	1 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)		
Education		17 (85)	63 (86.3)	5 (100)	0.82	0.661
	Diploma				89	
	Degree	3 (15)	10 (13.7)	0 (0)		
Religion		5 (25)	22 (30.1)	0 (0)	2.21	0.331
	Hindu				12	
	Christian	15 (75)	51 (69.9)	5 (100)		
Previous Experience with EOL Care		2 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5.14	0.273
	No				69	
	Yes	18 (90)	72 (98.6)	5 (100)		
Age in Years		9 (45)	33 (45.2)	1 (20)	5.42	0.712
	<25				34	
	26-30	5 (25)	22 (30.1)	3 (60)		
	30-35	3 (15)	12 (16.4)	1 (20)		
	35-40	3 (15)	4 (5.5)	0 (0)		
	>40	0 (0)	2 (2.7)	0 (0)		
Experience in Years		14 (70)	49 (67.1)	2 (40)	3.99	0.678
	<5				16	
	5-10	5 (25)	17 (23.3)	3 (60)		
	11-15	1 (5)	6 (8.2)	0 (0)		
	>15	0 (0)	1 (1.4)	0 (0)		

Table 2 denotes that there is no significant association between knowledge of staff nurses regarding end of life care and the demographic variables.

The association between demographic variables and the knowledge of staff nurses regarding end of life care was analyzed using Chi Square which revealed that there was no significant association.

In contrast, Subramaniam & Chinna (2013) did a study among Malaysian nurses where the χ^2 statistic showed a significant relationship between age and work experience with nurses and perception on end-of-life-care at p value of <0.05.

Conclusion

Although efforts are being made to improve nurse's knowledge regarding end of life care, practicing nurses still lack of knowledge in providing end-of-life care. One of the reasons could be due to lack of experience with end of life care. In this study majority of nurses had less than 1 year experience and they were below 30 years old. Continued practice development and in service education are needed in equipping nurses to offer appropriate, compassionate and competent end-of- life-care.

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