



PATIENT PERCEPTION AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ANAESTHESIOLOGY AT A TERTIARY CARE SERVICE HOSPITAL

Anaesthesiology

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ABSTRACT

Aim: To assess the knowledge about Anaesthesiology among patients at a tertiary care service hospital.

Objective:

1. Primary objective: To objectively assess the knowledge about Anaesthesiology amongst patients in a tertiary care centre.
2. Secondary objective: To educate the clientele about the field of Anaesthesiology.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Anaesthesiology is one of the youngest branches in the medical field and has developed exponentially over a short span of time. The mandate of an Anaesthesiologist is no longer confined to just conventional Operation Theatre (OT) and the ICU; it has spread out to critical care units, pain clinics, trauma centres, and resuscitation and rescue teams. Despite being a speciality, which is widespread and extends services to various departments in the hospital, its recognition and awareness amongst the clientele is considered to be miniscule. Also there are myths and incredulity about the field and its professionals.

With this thought process, the authors came up with an idea of objectively assessing, and at the same time edifying the patients about the role of Anaesthesiology in the medical world.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: It was a questionnaire-based study on patients scheduled for various surgical procedures under anaesthesia (general/neuroaxial/regional). A total of 100 patients were interviewed in the study.

Place and duration of study:

The survey was performed over a period of 15 days in a tertiary care service hospital.

Questionnaire:

A simplified questionnaire described as follows was used for the study. Personal Details:

- Name
- Gender
- Education
- Proposed surgery/procedure

Questions:

1. Have you undergone any surgery/procedure under anaesthesia in the past: Yes/No, If Yes:
 - a. Name of surgery/procedure
 - b. Type of anaesthesia received
 - c. Who all were present in OT before the procedure started: Surgeon, Anaesthesiologist, Matron, Assistant (tick)
 - d. Who administered you the anaesthesia: Surgeon, Matron, Technician, Anaesthesiologist
 - e. The person who administered you anaesthesia, was he a qualified doctor? Yes/No/Don't Know
 - f. Did he/she visit you prior to surgery? Yes/No
2. If patient has not undergone any procedure under anaesthesia previously:
 - a. Who all are likely to be present in OT when you are taken there: Surgeon, Matron, Anaesthesiologist, Technician
 - b. Will it be a painful procedure? Yes/No/Don't know
 - c. Will you be anaesthetized: Yes/No/Don't know
 - d. Who will be administering you anaesthesia? Surgeon/ Matron/

- Anaesthesiologist/Technician
- e. Is the person administering you anaesthesia a qualified doctor?
 - f. As per you, how many years of training does an Anaesthesiologist undergo?
 - g. What does an Anaesthesiologist do?
 - i. Decides the fitness for surgery and optimizes you for surgery
 - ii. Puts you to sleep
 - iii. Provides pain relief during surgery
 - iv. Wakes you up from sleep
 - v. Monitors you throughout surgery
 - vi. Responsible for pain relief after surgery
 - vii. All of the above
 - viii. None of the above
 - h. During the surgery, who is primarily responsible for your overall well being: Surgeon/Anaesthesiologist
 3. Are you aware about the type of anaesthesia you will receive?
 4. How many types of anaesthesia are you aware of?
 5. Are you aware about the complications of anaesthesia and if yes, what all complications you are aware of?
 6. Are you more concerned and scared about the surgery or the anaesthesia related to it?
 7. Are you concerned about waking up from anaesthesia during surgery?

Statistical Analysis

The data collected was tabulated using MS Excel, assessed and the results were expressed as percentages.

RESULTS

The study was skewed towards male gender as expected as it was conducted at a service hospital where at any given time the number of admitted male patients exceeds the female patients.

Table 1: Gender wise distribution

S.No	Gender	No of patients (%)
1.	Male	67
2.	Female	33

Graph 1:

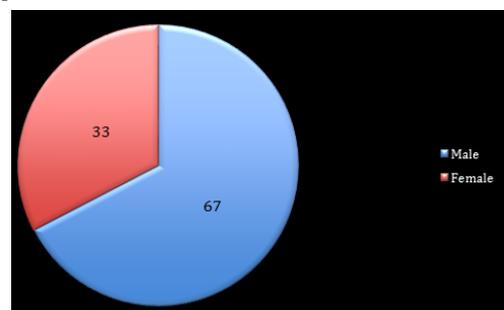


Table2: Age wise distribution

Majority of the patients were between their second-fourth decades of life.

S.No.	Age (yrs)	No of patients (%)
1.	21-30	39
2.	31-40	26
3.	41-50	13
4.	>50	22

Graph 2:

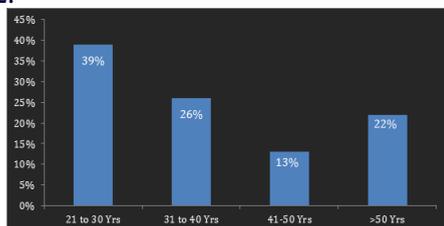
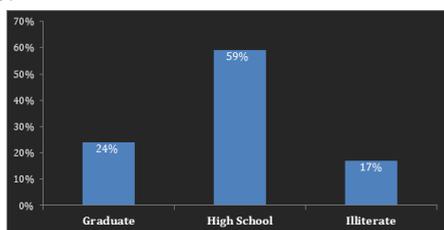


Table 3: Literacy Level

Majority of the patients were at least high school educated, which was beneficial as they were in a better position to understand and respond to the questionnaire.

S.No.	Education level	No. of patients (%)
1.	Illiterate	17
2.	High School	59
3.	Graduate	24

Graph 3:



Core of the study has been summarized as follows.

Table 4: Summary of Results

S.No.	Parameters	Percentage
1.	% of patients who felt that the person giving anaesthesia was a qualified doctor	75
2.	% of patients concerned about waking up from anaesthesia during the procedure	9
3.	Primary concern/scare related to anaesthesia	35
4.	Primary concern/scare related to surgery	46
5.	Who would be giving anaesthesia:	50
	a) Surgeon	46
	b) Anaesthesiologist	3
	c) OT Matron	1
	d) OT Technician	
6.	Concerned about waking up from surgery	Yes: 9% No: 91%
7.	Awareness about type of anaesthesia to be administered	Yes: 72% No: 28%

DISCUSSION

Over the years, despite increasing awareness about health care setup amongst Indian population, and increasing role of an Anaesthesiologist in critical and effective management of patients, not only the knowledge about Anaesthesiology as a field and its providers remains lacking, there are myths and skepticism. Also, a patient admitted to the hospital for a surgical procedure under anaesthesia is exposed to an alien and a strange environment wherein it is not possible for him to comprehend the role of various care providers associated with him. It is natural and understandable that he relates it more closely to the primary care clinician. We need to enlighten the patient about his expectations as far as the anaesthetic management is concerned.

Various Anaesthesiologists/residents of the department conducted the present study as an oral questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, the patients were briefed about Anaesthesiology as a subject and

primary role of an Anaesthesiologist in the hospital. In the present study we observed the following striking findings:

1. 35% of patients were more concerned and worried about the anaesthesia rather than surgery.
2. 28% of patients were not aware about the kind of anaesthesia to be administered.
3. 54% were not aware that actually an Anaesthesiologist would be administering the anaesthesia.

These results clearly indicate that the patients posted for surgical procedures under anaesthesia need to be enlightened to improve their understanding about the subject. This would address their apprehension and at the same time prepare them for what lies ahead of them. Good counseling may narrow the gap in the confidence level that a patient perceives with respect to the Surgeon relative to the Anaesthesiologist.² Secondly, in the era of ever increasing litigations in the medical practice, it is also important to brief the patients about the likely complications associated with the anaesthetic plan. To conclude, for most of the patients, Anaesthesiologists are like 'unseen doctors',³ like a bass guitarist of a band whose presence is inconspicuous until his absence!

Limitations

The present study was conducted at a single centre and a multi centric study would definitely increase its sensitivity. Also, the educational qualification of the patients can greatly influence their general perception about the subject.

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