



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE REGARDING HEALTH CARE LAWS AND ETHICS AMONG NURSES WORKING IN SELECTED HOSPITALS OF AMBALA, HARYANA.

Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ethics are the basic concept and fundamental principles of nurses conduct regarding the health care system. The knowledge of legal responsibilities is integral with the expanding clinical role and logical application of the planned, systematic and focused care, which should be the goal of Modern Nursing. **Objective:** To assess the knowledge and attitude of staff nurses regarding health care laws and ethics. **Method:** The research approach adopted for the study was Quantitative Research Approach. The research design adopted for the study was Descriptive Survey Design. Total 215 staff nurses were selected by using total enumerative sampling technique from MMIMS& R Hospital. The tools developed and used for data collection were structured knowledge questionnaire and five point Likert attitude scale, tools were prepared by focusing on knowledge and attitude respectively. **Results:** The study revealed that the mean of knowledge score of the staff nurses regarding health care laws and ethics was (7.07) with standard deviation (2.83) and mean of attitude score was (79.91) with standard deviation (8.03) respectively. The study concluded that staff nurses have average level of knowledge and had favorable attitude towards health care laws and ethics. There is moderately positive correlation between knowledge and attitude of staff nurses regarding health care laws and ethics.

KEYWORDS

Health care laws and ethics, Knowledge, Attitude.

INTRODUCTION:

Ethics are moral principles that govern how the person or a group will behave or conduct themselves. The focus pertains to the right and wrong of actions and encompasses the decision making process of determining the ultimate consequences of those actions. Safe nursing practice includes an understanding of the legal boundaries in which nurses must function. An understanding of ethics is essential to the delivery of skilled professional care. It is vital that nurses appreciate the value of ethics in their work. Ethics is relevant to clinical, practice based issues and affects all areas of professional nursing role. To apply ethics effectively, nurses must develop reasoning skills and understand the concept and principles that assessed ethical analysis.

The knowledge of legal responsibilities is important with the expanded clinical role. The goal of modern nursing is planned, systematic and focuses on patient care. Low ethical and moral standards and communication gap between nurses and patients are also responsible for problems in the health care system. One study conducted in 2003 among doctors and nurses to assess the knowledge and attitude of health care laws and ethics shows that 37% of the nurses had no knowledge about health care laws and ethics. Ethical knowledge helps nurses to justify what is correct or what is incorrect. It also promote respect for nurses and promotes the principles of bioethics and the right of health services user, which are important part of humanized care. A legal disaster can occur anytime when nurse's works in a patient area so as to reduce that disaster in hospital area the nurses should have legal and ethical knowledge. Ethics helps nurses to maintain the privacy of the client and allows the nurse to maintain the privacy of the client and allows the nurse to apply other laws so as to prevent from legal disasters. Nursing education in legal responsibilities contributes to the development of nurses as skilled companions. The National League for Nursing defines main competencies as, "Nursing skills need to be patient centered care and the validation of practice competence crucial for patient quality of care". A study was conducted to determine the knowledge regarding the ethical concepts among 100 staff nurses in M.P. Findings revealed that 9% staff nurses having poor knowledge, 36% had average, 51% had good knowledge and only 4% had excellent knowledge regarding health care laws and ethics.

Another study conducted in 2015 shows that 44.5% nurses had poor knowledge, 24.1% had average knowledge, 31.4% had good knowledge regarding ethical concepts.

Ethical principles provide a foundation for nursing practice and basis for nurses decisions on consideration of the consequences and of the universal moral principles when making clinical judgement.

A study conducted in 2011 among 180 Community Health Nurses shows that 88.3% nurses have moderate level of knowledge and the remaining 11.7% of nurses have adequate level of knowledge. Overall results revealed that nurses had moderate level of knowledge on legal aspects.

Nurses deal with the most fundamental events like birth death and sufferings; they encounter many legal issues surrounding these sensitive areas. Nurse play a role as advocate to assists patients and family struggling with complex information and difficult decisions. For effective patient care nurses need to be aware of ethical practices. Excellence in clinical skills along with a sound knowledge of standard practices related to ethics and its application in clinical setting is essential for health care providers.

Material and methods

Study type: Quantitative Research Approach.

Study design: Descriptive survey design

Study setting: MMIMS&R, Hospital Mullana, Ambala, Haryana

Study population: Total 215 Staff nurses working in different areas of the hospital were selected.

Formal approval was taken from the concerned authority. The tools for the present study were based on review of literature and consultation from the experts.

Exclusion Criteria: staff nurses who were not present at the time of data collection.

Sampling: In this study Total Enumerative sampling technique was used to collect the data.

Study Tools: Sample characteristics, structured knowledge questionnaire and attitude scale. Content validity and reliability of tools were ensured Data was collected with interview method.

Analysis: The collected data was entered in the MS Excel spreadsheet. Analysis was done using SPSS software version 16.0.

Ethical approval: Permission for study was taken from Medical Superintendent of MMIMS&R, Hospital.

Operational Definition:

Knowledge: In this study knowledge refers to ability of nurses to response regarding health care laws and ethics through structured knowledge questionnaire that is characterized into following levels- Very Good (>75%), Good (61-75%), Average (50-60%), Below Average (<50%)

Attitude: In this study attitude refers to the pattern of mental views of nurses towards health care laws and ethics assessed by attitude scale and categorized into following levels- favorable (>84%), moderately favorable (41-83%) and unfavorable (<41%).

Ethics: The science or study of moral values or principles including

ideals of autonomy, beneficence and justice.

Nurse: A person trained in the scientific basis of nursing, meeting certain prescribed standards of education and clinical competence.

RESULTS:

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Sample Characteristics

Sr. No.	Sample Characteristics	f	%
1.	Age (Years)		
	a. 20-24	50	14.2
	b. 25-29	114	32.6
	c. 30-34	107	30.6
	d. Above 34	79	22.6
2.	Religion		
	a. Hindu	160	74.4
	b. Sikh	48	22.3
	c. Muslim	04	1.9
	d. Christian	03	1.4
3.	Income per month		
	a. 5,000-10,000	89	41
	b. 10001-15,000	114	50
	c. 15001-20,000	11	5
	d. More than 20001	1	0.4
4.	Area		
	a. Medical surgical nursing	51	24
	b. Obstetrical and Gynecology	51	24
	c. Pediatric ward	12	5.5
	d. Critical care unit	47	21.8
	e. Others	54	25
5.	Professional education		
	a. GNM	141	65.5
	b. Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing	44	20.5
	c. B.Sc. Nursing	30	14
6.	Experience of work		
	a. Less than 2 years	125	57
	b. 2-5 years	84	40
	c. 6-10 years	6	3
7.	Have you met any legal issue during clinical practice		
	a. Yes	22	10
	b. No	193	90
8.	Have you attended any workshop related to health care laws and ethics		
	a. Ye	98	46
	b. No	117	54

Table 1 shows that majority of the staff nurses (60%) were in the age group of 20-24 years, from Hindu religion (74.4%), unmarried (64.8%), having income between 10,001- 15,000 (53.02%), having professional education upto GNM (65.5%), have less than 2 years of experience (58.1%), did not met any legal issue during clinical practice (89.7%) and did not attended any workshop related to health care laws and ethics. (54.4).

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of staff nurses according to level of knowledge

N=215

N=215

Level of knowledge	Score	Percentage	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Good	11-15	61-75	24	11.16
Average	5-10	50-60	132	61.40
Below average	<5	<50	59	27.44

Data in table 2 indicates that 61% of staff nurses had average level of knowledge, 27% had below average and 11% had good level of knowledge.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of staff nurses according to Attitude Scores

N=215

N=215

Level of Attitude	Score	Percentage	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Favourable	>84	>75%	71	33
Moderately favourable	41-83	50-75	144	67

Data in table 3 indicates the level of attitude and findings shows that 67% had moderately favorable and 33% had favorable level of attitude.

Table 4: Co-relation between knowledge scores and Attitude scores of staff nurses regarding health care laws and ethics

N=215

Test	Mean	R
Knowledge	7.07	0.05
Attitude	79.91	

Data in table 4 shows that there is moderately positive correlation between knowledge and attitude scores.

DISCUSSION

Finding of the present study revealed that the majority of staff nurses (61%) had average level of knowledge, 27% had below average and 11 % had good knowledge which is inconsistent with another study results which found that majority of staff nurses (56%) had average level of knowledge 42% had good level of knowledge and 2% had low level of knowledge regarding health care laws and ethics. Findings of present study revealed that more than half of the nurses have moderately favorable attitude and 33% had favorable attitude which is inconsistent with another study results which found that majority of nurses (65.5%) had highly favorable attitude and one third of nurses (35.5%) had few attitude regarding the legal aspects in patient care.

Recommendation:

1. The study may be conducted on large scales in selected hospitals for generalization of the findings.
2. A study may be conducted on nurses using structured teaching program regarding health care laws and ethics.
3. A similar study can be conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude among nursing students

CONCLUSION:

The study concluded that majority of staff nurses had average level of knowledge and least had good level of knowledge. Majority of staff nurses had moderately favorable level of attitude and least had favorable level of knowledge.

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