A Descriptive Study to assess the Knowledge Regarding Palliative Care among Staff Nurses in Selected Hospitals of Central Region of Gujarat State

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Abstract

Palliative care is the specialized medical and total care of those patients who are suffering from life limiting illnesses by a specially trained team of doctors, nurses and other professionals or specialists who work together in a team to provide care to the patients. Here, the disease is no longer responsive to the curative treatment or life prolonging treatments. The study objectives were (1) To assess the existing knowledge regarding palliative care among staff nurses (2) To find association between the knowledge regarding Palliative Care with selected demographic variables. Research approach used was descriptive approach which is a non-experimental design. The target population for the study was the Staff Nurses of selected hospitals of Central Region of Gujarat State and was selected by non-probability purposive sampling technique. The total samples under the study were 50 Staff Nurses. The data collection was done through structured knowledge questionnaire which was intended to assess the knowledge of the Staff Nurses regarding the Palliative care. The results were established by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Data represents that 42 (84%) samples belonged to the age group of 21-31 years which is highest, 37 (74 %) samples were GNM and 12 (24%) samples were B.Sc and 1 (2%) samples were PB.B.Sc, 24 (48 %) samples had more than 5 years of clinical experience and 26 (52 %) samples had less than 5 years of clinical experience, 33 (66%) samples were working in general wards, 2 (4%) samples were working in Labour Room, 6 (12 %) samples were working in O.P.D., 9 (18 %) samples were working in I.C.U., 17 (34 %) samples have undergone training related to Palliative care and 33 (66%) samples have not undergone any training related to Palliative care, majority 38 (76%) of staff nurses have moderately adequate level of knowledge and 6 (12%) of staff nurses have inadequate level of knowledge and 6 (12%) of staff nurses have adequate level of knowledge. There was no significant association between the knowledge scores and the demographic variables.

Keywords: Knowledge, Staff nurses, Palliative Care.

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INTRODUCTION

About 2.5 million live with cancer in India; more than 80% of them are incurable at diagnosis. Approximately 2.5 million live with HIV in India. Combined with other diseases, at least 5.5 million need palliative care in India. Less than 1% has access to Palliative Care.[1] Typically, palliative care is provided at home and a family member acts as the primary caregiver, supervised by professional medical staff. Advanced medical technology and services has made it possible for patients to get the same care at home that they would have gotten in palliative care centres.

Murtagh FE, Bausewein C,Verne J, Groeneveld EI, Kaloki YE, Higginson IJ conducted a research on the topic" How many people need palliative care? A study developing and comparing methods for population-based estimates" with the aim to refine existing methods of estimating population-based need for palliative care and to compare these methods to better inform their use. The results found were that a minimum of 63.03% of all deaths required palliative care.[2]

Kumar Senthil P. *et. al* (2012) conducted a cross sectional survey to assess the nurses knowledge on palliative care at a multi speciality hospital 363 nurses were selected. Palliative care knowledge test method used for data collection. It was found that the overall total score of PCKT was 7.16 ±2.65(35.8%) the philosophy score was 73±0.65 (36.5%), pain score was 2.09 ±1.19 (34.83%) dyspnea score was 1.13 ±0.95 (28.25%) psychiatry problem score was 1.83±1.02 (45.75%) and gastrointestinal problem score was 1.36 ±0.97 (34%) (P=00). The female nurses scored higher than their male counterparts, but the difference was not significant (P>.05). The study concluded that the nurses has poor knowledge about palliative care.[3]

Kalogeropoulou Maria *et al* (2016) conducted a cross-sectional study to assess knowledge on associated factors towards palliative care among 150 Greek nurses. It was found that means score of the nursing staff in PCQN was 8.9 (SD=2.6) (44.5% of the total 20), which indicates nurses had poor knowledge. The study conclude that majority of nurses included in the survey had poor knowledge about palliative care.[4]

Based on the above literatures, the investigators found that Nurses have poor knowledge on palliative care, hence they thought to conduct a study to assess the Knowledge regarding Palliative Care among Staff Nurses in Selected Hospitals of Central Region of Gujarat State.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quantitative research approach with Non – experimental Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The research was conducted in selected hospitals of central region of Gujarat state. The sample size was 50 staff nurses. Purposive sampling technique was used in the study to recruit the samples. The staff nurses who were qualified as GNM, graduate or above with state Nursing council registration were included in the study. Those who are working in Critical care area, Operation Theatre, palliative setting were excluded from the study. The tools used were demographic variables, self structured knowledge questionnaire on palliative care. The tool were validated from the experts and reliability established with Karl Pearsons correlation coefficient which was r=0.91. Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Institute. Written consent was taken from the staff nurses of selected hospitals. The collected data was analyzed by using the descriptive and inferential statistics.

RESULTS

Demographic variables of staff nurses: Data represents that 42 (84%) samples belonged to the age group of 21-31 years which is highest, 37 (74 %) samples were GNM and 12 (24%) samples were B.Sc and 1 (2%) samples were PB.B.Sc, 24 (48 %) samples had more than 5 years of clinical experience and 26 (52 %) samples had less than 5 years of clinical experience, 33 (66%) samples were working in general wards, 2 (4%) samples were working in Labour Room, 6 (12%) samples were working in O.P.D., 9 (18%) samples were working in I.C.U., 17 (34%) samples have undergone training related to Palliative care and 33 (66%) samples have not undergone any training related to Palliative care.

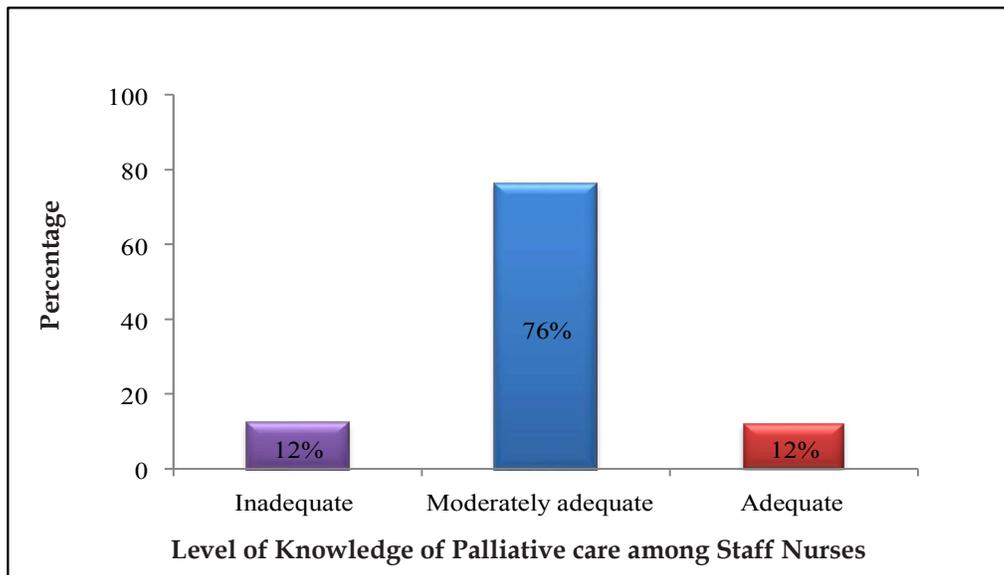## Knowledge regarding Palliative care among Staff nurses

Fig. 1: Percentage Distribution of level of knowledge of staff nurses regarding palliative care

Fig. 1 represents that 76% staff nurses are having moderately adequate level of knowledge regarding palliative care, 12% staff nurses are having inadequate level of knowledge regarding palliative care and 12% staff nurses are having adequate level of knowledge regarding palliative care.

Association Between the Knowledge Score and Selected Demographic Variables

Table 1: Analysis of data related to association between the knowledge score and selected demographic variables

Variables		F	< Median	> Median	Df	Table value	χ 2
Age	21 to 31 years	42	20	22			
	32 to 41 years	7	6	7	2	5.99	4.38 NS
	42 to 61 years	1	1	0			
Gender	Male	4	3	1			
	Female	46	24	22	1	3.84	0.77 NS
Education	GNM	37	21	16			
	B.Sc & PB.BSc	13	6	6	1	3.84	0.44 NS
Working experience	> 5 years	24	16	8			
	≤ 5 years	26	11	15	1	3.84	2.99 NS
Area of working	Ward	33	21	12			
	Labour room	2	1	1			
	O.P.D	6	2	4	3	7.81	3.83 NS
	I.C.U	9	3	6			
Training on palliative care	Yes	17	9	8			
	No	33	18	15	1	3.84	2.89 NS

NS-Not significant

Table 1 shows that the calculated values were lesser than tabulated chi square values for all the demographic variables. This shows that there is no significant association between the demographic variable and knowledge score.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, researcher found that majority 38 (76%) of staff nurses have moderately adequate level of knowledge and 6 (12%) of staff nurses have inadequate level of knowledge and 6 (12%) of staff nurses have adequate level of knowledge. The mean score was 11.36 with a standard deviation of 2.678. The study is concurrent with another by Sorifa Bet. al (2015) who assessed the knowledge & practice on palliative care in selected hospital of Guwahati city, Assam. 100 staff nurse were selected. It was found that maximum 79% have inadequate knowledge, 21% moderately adequate knowledge & no one had adequate knowledge on palliative care. The study concluded that the nurses have poor knowledge & practice regarding palliative care.[5]

There is no significant association between level of knowledge regarding palliative care with selected demographic variables such as Age, Gender, Education, Working experience, Area of working, Training program. These findings coincide with the findings of Iranmanesh S, Razban F, Tirgari B, Zahra G Nurses` knowledge about palliative care in southeast Iran. The mean score was 7.59. The most correct answers were in category of pain management and other symptoms (46.07%). The lowest correct answers were in the category of psychosocial and spiritual care (19.3%). These findings suggest that there is no significant association between the knowledge of staff nurses with age, gender, education, working experience, area of working and training program.[6]

CONCLUSION

Palliative care is often associated with cancer and end of life care, however many chronic conditions can be life threatening and result in symptom burden e.g. end-stage heart failure, renal failure and neurological conditions such as motor neuron disease, multiple sclerosis and dementia.

Information regarding Palliative care can be useful for the nursing health care personnel in providing quality care. The staff nurses should be encouraged to attend specialized courses and seminars related to Palliative care.

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