

## Research Article

# Knowledge and Attitude of Nursing Students Towards Sexuality

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24321/2455.9318.202408>

## I N F O

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**How to cite this article:**

Rajlaxmi, Parveen S. Knowledge and Attitude of Nursing Students Towards Sexuality. Int J Nurs Midwif Res. 2024;11(2):17-20.

Date of Submission: 2024-04-17

Date of Acceptance: 2024-05-21

## A B S T R A C T

**Introduction:** It is the right of young people to enjoy healthy lives. Giving young people scientifically accurate, developmentally appropriate sexual health education in a non judgemental manner is essential to assisting them in understanding their bodies, relationships, sexual feelings and accepting personal accountability for a healthy sexual behaviour. Young adults must gain the information, abilities, values, and attitudes necessary to build wholesome and accountable relationships and make wise and responsible choices. The objectives of the study were to assess knowledge and attitude of nursing students regarding sexuality.

**Method:** Quantitative approach with exploratory research design was used in the study. Sample consisted of 100 nursing students of undergraduate program from Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard selected by convenient sampling technique.

A structured knowledge questionnaire was developed and used for assessment of knowledge and a likert scale was used for attitude assessment. Both tools were developed by the researcher.

**Result:** The data were obtained and analyzed by descriptive statistics. Only 6 (6%) nursing students had adequate knowledge regarding sexuality and the majority i.e. 94 (94%) nursing students had inadequate knowledge regarding sexuality. Regarding attitude, it was found that majority of nursing students i.e. 81 (81%) had a favorable attitude and 19 (19%) of nursing students had unfavorable attitude regarding sexuality.

**Conclusion:** Based on findings, the majority of the students have inadequate knowledge but favorable attitude regarding sexuality. Apart from sex education at school level, adolescents need sex education at university level also. This would provide them numerous opportunities to think about all facets of sexuality and inculcate an optimistic sense of their own sexuality.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Attitude, Sexuality, Nursing Students

## Introduction

In Indian culture, discussing sex, venereal disease, and associated topics is frowned upon. It is still considered as a taboo to discuss about or raise any query related to sexuality. The elders' conservative views on sex inhibits children to clear their doubts related to even normal sexual developments and sexual issues.

Teenagers who lack information are unable to learn beneficial truths about sexuality. It is concerning to note that there is no agreement in India about the inclusion of sex and reproductive health education in the curriculum for colleges and universities. With the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, the increase in child rape, premarital sex and teenage pregnancies etc. it became imperative that colleges make a contribution towards addressing these issues. There is a need to inform children and adolescence with the knowledge on sex education so that they can make sound decision on issues related to sexuality.<sup>1</sup>

The period of adolescents are one of the transitional period with healthy life which includes sexual life also but more or less the parents do not provide any information related to sexual health to the adolescents. Sexuality education is the provision of necessary clues and guidance about body growth, puberty buildup, relationships, sexuality, and sex. This would also help the youth in developing the skills necessary for communication and making decisions about their sexual wellbeing. It should include orientation about puberty and reproduction, abstinence from sex, safe sex through condoms and other contraceptions, prevention of sexual abuse, relationships, sexual orientation, gender identification and body image. It is sometimes called sex education, sexual orientation or sex relationship education.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of sex education is to develop moral responsibility, self-worth, and self-awareness while equipping students with the knowledge and abilities to prevent and resist sexual encounters.<sup>3</sup>

## Material and Methods

Quantitative research approach and exploratory research design were used for the present study. The study was conducted in Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. The sample consisted of 100 students of Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery of class I and II year, selected through convenient sampling.

A structured knowledge questionnaire was used for assessment of knowledge. It consisted of 30 multiple choice items on domains of sex education. Each correct response was scored as 1 and incorrect response as 0. Knowledge categories based on scores were divided into two categories; adequate knowledge with score range from above 75% and inadequate knowledge for scores below

75%. For the assessment of attitude regarding sexuality among students, a 5 point likert scale was used. The scores ranged from 22 to 110. Attitude categories based on scores were divided into two categories, favorable attitude with score range from above 75% and unfavorable attitude for scores below 75%.

Formal administrative approval for collection of data was taken from concerned authorities. Informed consent was taken from willing participants. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by coding. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. These tools were validated by experts in field. The reliability of the tools were ensured by measuring Cronbach's alpha and was found to be 0.78 for the knowledge questionnaire and 0.82 for the likert scale.

## Results

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and is done under two sections.

**Table I. Frequency & percentage of student nurses by their demographic data**

n=100			
S.No	Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	17-19yrs	32	32%
	20-22yrs	58	58%
	23-26 yrs	10	10%
	above 26yrs	0	0
2	Gender		
	Male	28	28%
	Female	72	72%
	others	0	0
3	Year of Study		
	DGNM I year	63	63%
	DGNM II year	37	37%
4	Type of Family		
	Nuclear	71	71%
	Joint	21	21%
	Single-parent	08	8%
5	Religion		
	Hindu	17	17%
	Islam	78	78%
	Christian	04	04%
	Buddhism	1	1%
	Any other	0	0

6	Educational Status of Father		
	Illiterate	10	10%
	Primary/Secondary	25	25%
	Graduate	43	43%
	Post graduate & Above	22	22%
7	Educational Status of Mother		
	Illiterate	26	26%
	Primary/Secondary	52	52%
	Graduate	20	20%
	Post graduate & Above	2	2%

**Table 2. Frequency & percentage of student nurses by their knowledge scores regarding sexuality**

n= 100

Category of knowledge	Range of scores	Obtained range of scores	Frequency/ Percentage
Inadequate	0-22	6-17	94%
Adequate	23-30	25-28	6%

**Table 3. Frequency and percentage of student nurses by their Attitude scores regarding sexuality**

n=100

Category of attitude	Range of scores	Frequency	Percentage
Unfavorable	0-82	19	19%
Favorable	83-110	81	81%

## Discussion

The findings of present study revealed that majority of the nursing students (94%) have inadequate knowledge and majority of them (81%) had positive attitude regarding sexuality. Similar findings were reported in a study conducted by Ajibade B. L, Olagunju R.O. Oyediran S on 300 school students where it was found that they had positive attitude to sex education. Regarding knowledge it was found that they had inadequate knowledge regarding sex education as most (53%) of them did not actually comprehend the meaning of sex education.<sup>4</sup>

Similar results were seen in another study conducted by Altekari S, Sanade MM, Gavandi S, Shinde J on adolescent students in which it was found that majority i.e. 72% of the students had inadequate knowledge regarding sexuality and most of them (66%) had an uncertain attitude regarding sexuality.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the present study, Augustine NM reported in her study that over 80% of students had good knowledge regarding reproduction including fertilization, and physical changes happening in puberty. However less students (69%) held good knowledge

concerning sexually transmitted diseases that can lead to infertility.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to the present study, Elizabeth J, Lathamangeswari C, Singh S did a study on 120 nursing students and found that (6%) were having poor knowledge (56%) were having average knowledge and only (38%) of them had good knowledge regarding sex education.<sup>7</sup>

## Recommendations

The present study was limited to a selected university and small number of samples. For better generalizations of the findings, similar study can be replicated on large sample. Sex education needs to be implemented in schools, beginning at the primary level. Age-appropriate topics should be introduced as students progress through high school and college. Specialized training for teachers should be provided to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver sex education and create a comfortable environment for discussions.

## Conclusions

There is a need to provide appropriate information to adolescents about issues related to sexuality. Encouraging adolescent sexual health is essential for their overall development. Sex education must be provided in school initiating at the primary level and introducing topics gradually as per their age as they progress through high school and college. It should be inclusive of information regarding reproductive health, life skills, safe sex, STIs, and pregnancy. Specialized training for teachers should be provided to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively deliver sex education and create a comfortable environment for discussions.

**Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted**

**Technologies in the Writing Process:** None

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