

Research Article

# Knowledge Assessment of Nursing Students Regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) Community

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

**Introduction:** Lack of knowledge regarding the community among health care providers is an important factor in the discrimination experienced by LGBTQ+ in health care facilities which affects their health and wellbeing. Healthcare providers knowledge and awareness regarding LGBTQ+ community can reduce or eliminate prejudices and discrimination against them.

**Objective:** The objective of the study was assessment of the knowledge of students regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) community in a selected college of Nursing of Delhi.

**Method:** The present study has adopted quantitative approach and descriptive research design. A structured knowledge questionnaire was developed and validated by seven experts. Purposive sampling technique was used and formal permissions were obtained from the authorities. A total number of 68 students of DGNM 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year has participated in the study after giving informed consent. Pilot study and final study was conducted. Data was analyzed using descriptive studies.

**Result:** The study found that majority of Nursing Students (67.64%) had average knowledge and 32% had poor knowledge and none of the subject had good knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ community.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that majority of the students have average knowledge and rest have poor knowledge and none of the students have good knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ community.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, LGBTQ+ Community, Nursing Students

## Introduction

In general, our society accepts only two genders, male and female. Heterosexuality is the norm. Due to these norms set by society we often forget about existence of those who don't identify themselves as a male or female or are

homosexual. They are commonly referred to as LGBTQ+ community.

LGBTQ is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. It is being used since the 1990s. The term is adapted from the initialism LGB, which was used

instead of the term gay to refer to the LGBT community in 1980s. It is believed that the term gay community did not completely represent all those to whom it referred.<sup>1</sup> LGBTQ term is frequently used in the community because it is more user-friendly.

Recently countries around the globe have taken steps to protect the rights of LGBTQ people. The International human rights law states that all individuals have an equal right to live free from viciousness, mistreatment, segregation and disgrace. But still millions of LGBTQ person and their family all around the world confront widespread human rights infringement.

In India Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people may experience legal and social problems not faced by non-LGBT persons. In 2018, the Supreme Court of India has declared Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code unconstitutional. Now, homosexuality is no more illegal or a criminal offence in India. but many legal protections are still not provided to them including anti-discrimination laws and same-sex marriage.<sup>2</sup>

LGBT people confront well-being aberrations connected to societal shame, discrimination, and refusal of their civil and human rights. Discrimination against LGBT people has been related to increased rates of psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and suicide. Experiences of violence and victimization are common for LGBT people, and have long-lasting impacts on the person and the community. Personal, family, and social acknowledgement of sexual orientation and gender identity influences the mental well-being and personal safety of LGBT people.<sup>3</sup>

According to a study these people face health care risks that are often not looked at because of the lack of knowledge of patient's sexual orientation, not knowing anything about specific health care issues or because patients feel that the health care professional is extremely afraid of homosexuality. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender patients are at increased risk of suicide, eating disorders, drug abuse, and breast and anal cancer. Fear and lack of knowledge by both providers and patients can lead to improper or no provision of health care. Professionals need to create awareness and take steps to create an open, non-hostile environment. Community outreach, education, and research are necessary to provide the best health care for this population.<sup>4</sup>

A study was conducted in 2013 to assess undergraduate nursing student's knowledge, attitude and cultural competence in caring for LGBTQ+ patients. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) patients experience barriers to health care that include fear of discrimination, lack of knowledge about the community among health care providers and lack of sensitivity towards LGBTQ+

population and their specific health needs. This study assessed the effectiveness of an educational intervention designed to improve knowledge level and attitudes of nursing students toward LGBT patient care. The results of this study showed both an improvement in attitudes and an increase in knowledge level directly after the educational intervention.<sup>5</sup>

A study was conducted in 2006 on medical students ability to care for LGBTQ+ patients. The goal of the study was to find out medical students ability to care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) patients and to identify possible deficiencies in medical school curricula related to the care. The study concluded that medical students with more clinical exposure to LGBT patients can collect more comprehensive histories, hold more positive attitudes toward LGBT patients, and had greater knowledge of LGBT health care concerns than students with little or no clinical exposure.<sup>6</sup>

Being a healthcare worker, the student nurses must be aware of the LGBTQ people, their rights, their health needs, how to address them, their privacy needs, violence against them.

Thus, through this study, the investigators got information regarding the knowledge of student nurses regarding LGBTQ+ community and this study can be the foundation for further studies.

## Materials and Methods

The research approach adopted for the present study was quantitative approach and research design was descriptive study. The target population was DGNM students. Study excluded the nursing students who were included in any other ongoing research and who were not willing to participate. The tool developed for the data collection was structured knowledge questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was divided into 2 sections to assess the knowledge of the student nurses regarding LGBTQ+ community.

**Section 1:** Consisted of questions related to personal details. Personal data included demographic data such as age, sex, religion, and attitude-based question.

**Section 2:** Consisted of 30 multiple choice questions with 4 options.

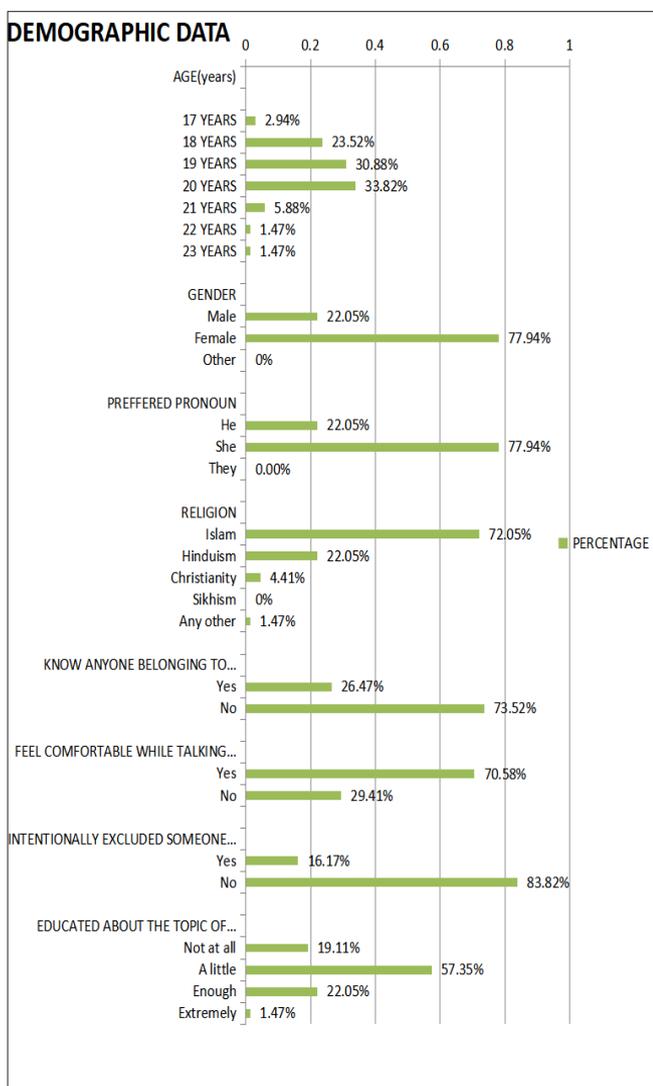
Content validity was done by seven experts from different fields of Nursing. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. Pilot and final study was conducted after obtaining formal permission and consent of the participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained of the participants.

A total number of sixty-eight students of DGNM 1<sup>st</sup> year and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of selected College of Nursing,

had participated in the final study conducted between 12.03.2020 to 13.03.2020. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency, percentage, means and median and standard deviation were used to describe the demographic profile and level of knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ community. Based on scores, the subjects were categorized as having poor, average, or good knowledge of LGBTQ+ community. Those who scored between 0-9 were categorized as having poor knowledge of LGBTQ+ community, those who scored between 10-19 were categorized as having average knowledge of LGBTQ+ community, those who scored between 20-30 were categorized as having good knowledge of LGBTQ+ community. The analyzed data were presented in the form of graphs.

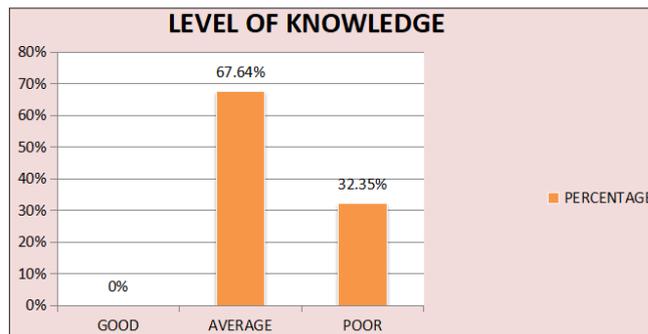
**Results**

**Findings Related to Sample Characteristics**



**Figure 1. Bar Graph Showing Percentage Distribution of Students by Their Demographic Variables**

**Findings Regarding Knowledge of Sample about LGBTQ+ Community**



**Figure 2. Percentage Distribution of Students according to the Level of Knowledge**

**Discussion**

The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge of the students regarding Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ+) community in a selected college of Nursing of Delhi. Study revealed that majority (67.64%) of the sample had average knowledge, 32.35% had poor knowledge and none had good knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ community.

This study is not congruent with the study done by Sanchez FN, Rabatin J, Sanchez PJ, et al. The study concluded that medical students with more clinical exposure to LGBT patients had greater knowledge of LGBT health care concerns than students with little or no clinical exposure.<sup>6</sup>

Nurses should have knowledge about LGBTQ+ community. They should be aware of rights, health needs, privacy needs of the LGBTQ+ Community. It is important to know how to address them and respect their individuality. Information regarding various prejudice against the community and incidence of violence against them will pave ways for provision of better care to them. Findings of the study will act as a catalyst to carry out more extensive research on a large population sample in various settings to generalize the findings.

**Conclusion**

Based on the finding of the study it was concluded that majority of the students have average knowledge and rest have poor knowledge and none of the students have good knowledge regarding LGBTQ+ community.

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