

Research Article

A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Practice of Staff Nurses regarding Prevention of Perineal Tear at District and Sub-district Hospitals in Poonch

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24321/2455.9318.202315>

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How to cite this article:

Choudhary GK. A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Practice of Staff Nurses regarding Prevention of Perineal Tear at District and Sub-district Hospitals in Poonch. *Int J Nurs Midwif Res.* 2023;10(4):6-10.

Date of Submission: 2023-05-31

Date of Acceptance: 2023-07-17

A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Perineal trauma is a common outcome during vaginal childbirth, occurring in about 40% of women during their first birth and about 20% in subsequent births. Perineal tears are more common in women having their first vaginal birth. They range from small nicks and abrasions to deep lacerations affecting several pelvic floor muscles. It is essential to manage the second stage of labour with a controlled delivery that minimises trauma. So, every nurse should be aware of preventive measures regarding perineal tear.

Objectives: To assess the knowledge and practice of staff nurses regarding the prevention of perineal tear at district and sub-district hospitals in Poonch

Method: This study used non-experimental descriptive research design. The setting of this study was district and sub-district hospitals in Poonch. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 subjects. The tool included 3 sections namely; demographic variables, a questionnaire to assess knowledge containing 40 items and an observational checklist containing 32 practices.

Results: It was observed that 56.7% of study subjects had moderate knowledge, 26% had inadequate knowledge, and 16.7% had adequate knowledge regarding the prevention of perineal tear. There was a significant association between knowledge level with the place of posting ($p < 0.05$) and during observation of practices, it was found that 46.7% of study subjects had satisfactory practice, 23.3% had inadequate practice and 15% had good practice. There was a significant association between practice level and place of posting ($p < 0.05$) and there was a positive correlation between knowledge and practice.

Conclusion: The result of the present study showed that the majority of the subjects did not possess adequate knowledge regarding the prevention of perineal tear, so there is a need to educate them. The study also revealed that study subjects did not show adequate practice regarding the prevention of perineal tear, hence there is a need to make them aware of the practices associated with the prevention of perineal tear.

Keywords: Knowledge, Practice, Perineal Tear, Staff Nurses

Introduction

Motherhood presents a special set of challenges for women i.e. physical, emotional and psychological challenges. Therefore, caring for the mother during pregnancy and delivery is extremely significant. During the process of normal delivery, laceration of the genital tract occurs due to the rapid and sudden expulsion of the head, excessive size of the newborn, soft maternal tissue, and difficult forceps deliveries. Around 70% of women who have a vaginal birth have some degree of tear and this damage may result in perineal pain for a few weeks after the birth, and some women experience long-term pain and discomfort during sexual intercourse in later life.^{1,2}

Perineal tears vary widely in severity. Most of them are superficial and may require no treatment, but severe perineal tears can cause remarkable bleeding, long-term pain or discomfort. If the tear is small, the mother is advised to take complete bed rest for a few weeks and if the tear is large, it needs to be repaired immediately. Perineal tear is more common in primigravida than in multigravida women.³⁻⁵ During delivery, in order to prevent the perineal tear, the nurse should control the delivery of the head to avoid forcible delivery. Obstetric causes of perineal tear are malpresentations such as breech, contracted pelvic outlet, prolonged labour, operative vaginal deliveries (forceps or vacuum), macrosomic babies, occipito-posterior delivery, precipitate labour, epidural analgesia induction of labour, and rigid perineum. The non-obstetric causes of perineal tear are rape, molestation, fall, and accidental injuries.^{6,7} It is crucial for nurses to recognise and understand the normal birth process to detect and prevent complications in normal labour and birth.⁸ It is possible only when the nurses and other members of the obstetric team use their knowledge and skills in a concerted effort to provide care. It is essential to manage the second stage of labour with a controlled delivery that minimises laceration. The investigator found a dire need for the current study as maximum deliveries are conducted by nursing officers in both district and sub-district hospitals. Thus, the study on knowledge and practice regarding the prevention and management of perineal tear among staff nurses was found feasible to be conducted in the district and sub-district hospitals in Poonch.

Methodology

Non-experimental descriptive research design was adopted to assess the knowledge and practices regarding the prevention of perineal tear among 60 staff nurses working in the labour room and postnatal wards of the district and sub-district hospitals in Poonch. They were selected through purposive sampling technique. The tool included three sections, namely demographic variables i.e. age, professional qualification, years of experience,

place of posting and exposure to any in-service training programme regarding prevention of perineal tear, a questionnaire containing 40 items to assess knowledge and an observational checklist containing 32 practices. Categories of knowledge were as follows: inadequate knowledge with scores less than 20 (50%), moderately adequate with scores between 21 and 30 (50%-75%) and adequate knowledge with scores between 31 and 40 (> 75%). The observation checklist to assess the practices of staff nurses during normal delivery regarding the prevention of perineal tear consisted of 32 items to be ticked as yes or no. Inadequate practice implied a score of less than 16 (< 50%), satisfactory practice implied a score between 17 and 24 (50%-75%), and good practice implied a score between 25 and 32 (> 75%). The tool was translated into the Urdu language and then re-translated into English. The reliability of the tool was calculated by using Karl Pearson's correlation reliability coefficient. The coefficient of reliability was 0.97, hence the tool was found to be reliable.

The researcher took ethical clearance from the parent institution i.e. Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Science and Mader-e-Meharban Institute of Nursing Science and Research to conduct the study. After the administrative approval from the parent institution, subjects were informed about the privacy and confidentiality of the collected data and informed consent was obtained from them. It took 35-40 minutes to complete the questionnaire for one staff nurse. The checklist to assess the practice was also administered on the same day to assess the practice of staff nurses regarding the prevention of perineal tear. It took about 30-35 minutes to complete the practice assessment for one staff nurse. The data were compiled in the master data sheet and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

Section I: Demographic Variables of Study Subjects

Most (56.7%) of the study subjects belonged to the age group of 20-30 years, whereas 31.7% belonged to the age group of 31-40 years and a few (11.7%) belonged to the age group of more than 40 years. A majority (76.7%) of the study subjects were diploma holders in nursing, whereas a smaller number of study subjects (23.3%) had BSc Nursing as their professional qualification. 58.3% of the participants were posted in the labour room and 41.7% were posted in the postnatal ward. 48.3% of the study subjects had 1-5 years of working experience, 48.3% had 6-10 years of working experience, and a few study subjects (8.4%) had more than 10 years of working experience. 85% of respondents had not attended any in-service training programme and a smaller number of study subjects (15%) had attended in-service training programmes.

Section II: Knowledge Level of Study Subjects regarding Prevention of Perineal Tear

It was seen that 56.7% of study subjects had moderate knowledge, 26% had inadequate knowledge and only 16.7% had adequate knowledge regarding the prevention of perineal tear.

Section III: Association of Knowledge Level of Study Subjects with Their Selected Demographic Variables

The study showed a significant association between level of knowledge and place of posting ($p < 0.05$) (Table 1).

Section IV: Practice Level of Study Subjects regarding Prevention of Perineal Tear

The result showed that 46.7% of study subjects had satisfactory practice, 38.3% had inadequate practice and 15% had good practice.

Section V: Association of Practice Level with Selected Demographic Variables

A significant association was observed between practice level and place of posting ($p < 0.05$) in this study. There was no significant association between practice level and demographic variables like age, professional qualification, years of experience, and exposure to any in-service training programme (Table 2).

Table 1. Association of Knowledge with Demographic Variables

(N = 60)

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Inadequate Knowledge	Moderately Adequate Knowledge	Adequate Knowledge	Chi-square Value	p Value	Remarks
Age (years)	20-30	34	8	20	6	1.135	0.88	NS
	31-40	19	5	11	3			
	> 40	7	3	3	1			
Professional qualification	Diploma in Nursing	36	11	29	6	3.528	0.171	NS
	BSc Nursing	14	5	5	4			
Place of posting	Labour room	35	5	22	8	7.326	0.026	S*
	Postnatal ward	25	11	12	2			
Years of experience	1-5	29	8	15	6	1.912	0.752	NS
	6-10	26	6	17	3			
	> 10	5	2	2	1			
Exposure to in-service training programme	Yes	9	2	4	3	2.121	0.346	NS
	No	51	14	30	7			

NS: Not significant, *S: Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2. Association of Practice Level of Study Subjects with Their Selected Demographic Variables

(N = 60)

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency	Inadequate Practice	Satisfactory Practice	Good practice	Chi-square Value	p Value	Remarks
Age (years)	20-30	34	12	17	5	0.389	0.98	NS
	31-40	19	8	8	3			
	> 40	7	3	3	1			

Professional qualification	Diploma in Nursing	46	17	22	7	0.161	0.923	NS
	BSc Nursing	14	6	6	2			
Place of posting	Labour room	35	9	18	8	7.355	0.025	S*
	Postnatal ward	25	14	10	1			
Years of experience	1-5	29	12	12	5	2.429	0.657	NS
	6-10	26	8	14	4			
	> 10	5	3	2	0			
Exposure to in-service training programme	Yes	9	3	4	2	0.799	0.448	NS
	No	51	20	24	7			

NS: Not significant, *S: Significant at 0.05 level

Section VI: Correlation of Knowledge Level and Practice Level of Study Subjects regarding Prevention of Perineal Tear

The results show that there was a positive correlation ($r = 0.79$) between the knowledge level and practice level of staff nurses regarding the prevention of perineal tear.

Discussion

The findings of the present study showed that 56.7% of study subjects had moderate knowledge, 26.7% had inadequate knowledge and only 16.7% had adequate knowledge regarding prevention of perineal tear. These findings are supported by Jithya et al.⁹ who conducted a study to assess the knowledge and practice regarding prevention of perineal tear among 30 staff nurses at Jijamata Hospital, Pimpri, Pune. The study revealed that 70% of study subjects had average knowledge, 26.7% had poor knowledge, and only 3.3% had good knowledge regarding the prevention and management of perineal tear.

The present study showed that there was no significant association between knowledge level regarding prevention of perineal tear and demographic variables like age, professional qualification, years of experience, and in-service training programme attended, but there was a significant association between knowledge level and place of posting ($p < 0.05$). These findings are similar to those of Fernandes et al.¹⁰ who conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of an information booklet on knowledge regarding prevention and management of perineal tear among 40 staff nurses at Justice KS Hegde Charitable Hospital, Mangalore. The findings revealed that there was no significant association between the knowledge of staff nurses regarding the prevention and management

of perineal tear with demographic variables like age, professional qualification, years of experience and source of information.

The findings of the present study showed that 46.7% of study subjects had satisfactory practice, 38.3% had inadequate practice and 15% had good practice. These findings are similar to the results of a study by Jithya et al.⁹ which revealed that 80% of study subjects had average practice and 20% had good practice regarding the prevention and management of perineal tear.

No significant association between practice level regarding prevention of perineal tear and demographic variables like age, professional qualification, years of experience, and in-service training programme attended was seen in this study. However, there was a significant association between practice level and place of posting ($p < 0.05$). This is supported by Jithya et al.⁹ who found that there was no significant association of practice level regarding the prevention of perineal tear with demographic variables like age, professional qualification, education, experience, number of deliveries conducted in a month and any in-service educational programme attended.

A positive correlation between knowledge and practice was seen in the present study. Staff nurses who had adequate knowledge had good practice. A similar study conducted by Jithya et al.⁹ also revealed that there was a positive correlation between knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of perineal tear.

Recommendations

Similar studies may be replicated using a large sample and/or other health workers, and true/ quasi-experimental studies can be conducted with structured teaching

programmes on knowledge and practice regarding the prevention of perineal tear. Hospital administration should arrange continuing educational programmes for nursing personnel working in clinical areas and should also conduct nursing conferences, seminars, workshops and hands-on training programmes related to perineal tear. It should be ensured that nurses are provided opportunities to participate in such programmes.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the knowledge and practice of staff nurses regarding the prevention of perineal tear was moderate. Knowledge and practice were found to be positively correlated; study subjects who had moderate knowledge also had better practice.

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: None

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