



Research Article

A Descriptive Study to Assess the Knowledge and Attitude regarding Palliative care among the Nursing Students

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A B S T R A C T

Introduction: Palliative care is specialized medical care that focuses on providing relief from pain and other symptoms of a serious illness. It can provide at any stage of serious illness. Palliative care includes the symptomatic treatment and also helpful in improving the quality of life of a person suffering from serious illness.

Objectives: The objectives of the study were to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding palliative care among student nurses in a selected college.

Method: A quantitative research approach along with descriptive research design was used. Data was collected through convenience sampling technique from 105 students of DGNM 2nd year and B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing 2nd year of Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi in the month of July 2024. Structured knowledge questionnaire and five-point rating scale was used to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding palliative care.

Result: Out of 105 samples, 4.77% has adequate knowledge on palliative care, followed by 42.85% having moderately adequate knowledge on palliative care and 52.38% having inadequate knowledge regarding palliative care and 5.71% participants having unfavourable attitude while 94.29% having favourable attitude regarding palliative care.

Conclusion: Based on the present research findings, it was concluded that majority of students had inadequate level of knowledge regarding palliative care and majority of students have favourable attitude regarding palliative care. So, there is a need to organize session on palliative care to increase the knowledge of participants.

Keywords: Palliative Care, Knowledge, Serious Illness, Attitude

Introduction

Palliative care is a medical specialty that combines a philosophy of care with a well-organized, highly structured system for providing treatment to patients with diseases

that are life-threatening or incapacitating from the time of diagnosis until their death, followed by grief support for the family. Providing patients with "low tech and high touch" care is the idea of palliative care, which aims to prolong life rather than prolong it. Instead of focusing



on diseases, it is patient-centric. The word “palliate,” which meaning to lessen the impact of something bad, painful, damaging, or harsh, is where the term “palliative care” originates. By reducing the intensity of a disease’s symptoms without treating its underlying cause, palliative care aims to enhance the quality of life for patients, their loved ones, and friends. Palliative care is described by the WHO as a method that enhances the quality of life for patients and their families dealing with life-threatening illnesses by preventing suffering through early detection, accurate assessment, and treatment of pain and other physical, psychological, and spiritual issues.¹

Palliative care enhances the quality of healthcare in three areas: it alleviates physical and psychological suffering; it strengthens and improves the process of communication and decision-making between patients and physicians; and it guarantees coordinated continuity of care across various healthcare settings, including long-term care, hospice, and hospitals. Therefore, palliative care aims to improve the quality of life for patients and their families by providing nursing care, psycho-social support, and spiritual guidance, as well as by responding to pain and other uncomfortable medical symptoms. A multifaceted, interdisciplinary team consisting of physicians, nurses, social workers, counsellors, and volunteers is the most effective way to administer this. India is classified as a developing nation, yet within the last 20 years, the country’s population has gotten older and the prevalence of advanced cancer has increased. In India, an estimated one million new instances of cancer are diagnosed annually, with more than 80% of those cases manifesting at stages III and IV. In India, palliative care is desperately needed.²

Methodology

The quantitative research approach was used and the design for the study was Descriptive Research Design. The study was conducted in June – July 2024. The setting of study was Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. The population comprised of students of selected nursing college. Sample consists of B.Sc. (Hons.) 2nd year and DGNM 2nd year of Rufaida College of Nursing. The

sample size included 105 nursing students. Purposive sampling technique was used. Consent was taken from each participant. The tool was developed by an extensive review of literature to develops the items and scoring technique.

The tool was divided into 3 sections: A- Demographic Variables, section B structured knowledge questionnaire was used to assess knowledge, section C 5 points Likert scale to assess levels of attitude.

Section A- Demographic Variables - It includes 7 questions regarding demographic data such as age, gender, religion, educational qualification, previous knowledge of, have, source of information and past experience of providing palliative care.

Section B- Assessment of knowledge regarding palliative care – It consist of 25 multiple choice questions was used to assess the knowledge regarding Palliative care among nursing students and 1 mark was given for each correct answer and 0 mark was given for each wrong answer.

Section C – Assessment of attitude regarding palliative care. It consists of a structured 5-point Likert scale to assess the attitude regarding palliative care among nursing students and it consist of strongly agree or strongly disagree.

Results

Section: A Findings related to demographic variables of subjects.

SECTION-B Findings Related to level of knowledge score related to palliative care among nursing students.

As data represented in Table 2 shows regarding the level of knowledge i.e. 52.38% of students having Inadequate knowledge followed by 42.85% of students having moderately adequate knowledge and only 4.77% of students having adequate knowledge.

SECTION-C Findings related to the attitude regarding palliative care among nursing students.

Data represented in Table3 shows that, Majority of student nurses 94.29% have favorable attitude while only 5.71% have unfavorable attitude regarding palliative care.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Subjects According to Their Demographic Characteristics

N=105

S.NO	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Age		
	18-19years	22	20.95%
	20-21years	49	46.60%
	22-23years	27	25.71%
	24 and above	6	5.71%

2	Gender		
	Male	35	36.75%
	Female	69	72.45%
	Transgender	1	1.05%
3	Religion		
	Hinduism	28	26.66%
	Islam	74	70.47%
	Christian	2	1.90%
	Other	1	0.95%
4	Educational Qualification		
	B.SC. (HONS.) NURSING	48	45.71%
	DGNM	57	54.28%
5	Previous Knowledge Regarding Palliative Care		
	Yes	80	76.19%
	No	25	23.80%
6	Source of Knowledge		
	Book	29	27.61%
	Internet	17	16.19%
	Family and cousin	11	10.47%
	Teacher	27	25.71%
	Hospital	17	16.19%
	Training / conference	4	3.80%
7	Experience Regarding Palliative Care		
	Yes	44	41.90%
	No	61	58.09%

Table 2. Frequency And Percentage Distribution of Knowledge Regarding Palliative Care Among Nursing Students

N=105

S.NO.	Level of knowledge	Range Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Inadequate Knowledge	1-12	55	52.38%
2	Moderately adequate knowledge	13-18	45	42.85%
3	Adequate Knowledge	19-24	5	4.77%

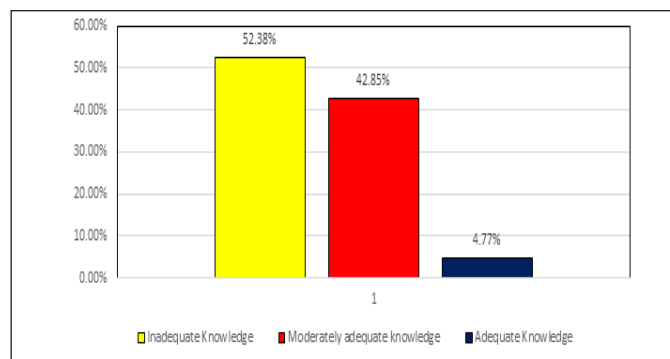


Figure 1. Assessment of Level of Knowledge Regarding Palliative Care

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Attitude Regarding Palliative Care Among Nursing Students

S.NO.	Attitude Category	Range Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Unfavorable attitude	0-42	6	5.71%
2	Favorable attitude	43-60	99	94.29%

N=105

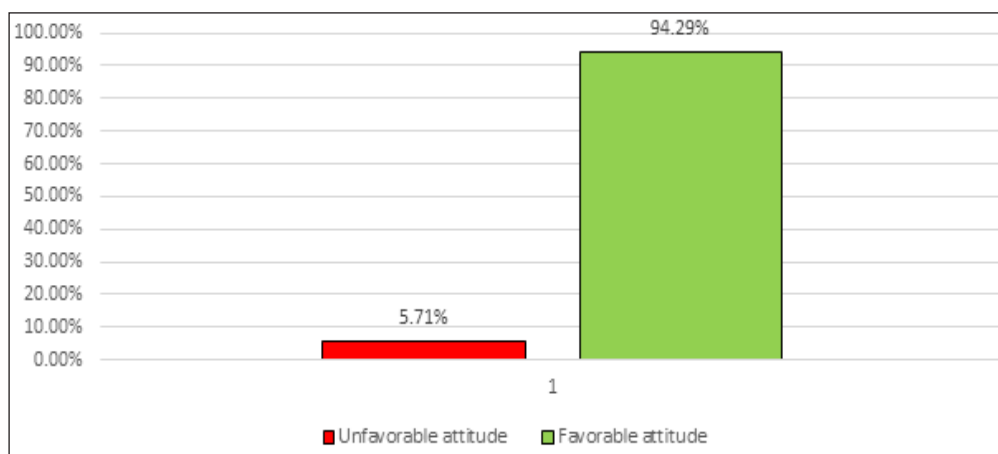


Figure 2. Assessment of Attitude Regarding Palliative Care

Discussion

Findings of the study shows that, half of the nursing students i.e.52.38% have inadequate knowledge regarding the palliative care and 42.85%had moderately adequate knowledge and only 4.77%of the participants had adequate knowledge while majority of the Nursing students i.e. 94.29% of students were having favorable attitude and 5.71% of students having unfavorable attitude towards palliative care.

A similar study was conducted by Karkada S, Nayak BS, Malathi on Awareness of Palliative Care Among Diploma Nursing Students. A correlative survey was carried out among 83 third-year Diploma Nursing students by using cluster sampling method from selected nursing schools of Udupi district. The main goal of the study was to identifying the level of knowledge and attitude of nursing students regarding palliative care. The findings of the present study show that, only 43.4% of them were aware of the term palliative care and it was during their training period. The data showed that 79.5% of students had poor knowledge (6.4 ± 1.64) on palliative care and 92.8% of them had favourable attitude (56.7 ± 8.5) towards palliative care.³

Another similar study was conducted by Altarawneh WM, Masa'deh R, Hamaideh SH, Saleh AM, Alhalaiqa F, to explore the levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward palliative care (PC) among nurses working with patients diagnosed with cancer in Jordan. Cross sectional design was adopted and data was collected by using an online

self-report questionnaire from 228 nurses working at four hospitals in Amman. Results of the present study showed a low level of PC knowledge ($M = 8.8$), a moderate level of attitudes ($M = 80.9$) toward dying patients, and a moderate level of PC practices ($M = 52.7$).⁴

Conclusion

The study was aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude regarding palliative care among nursing students of selected College New Delhi. Regarding knowledge, half of the nursing students i.e.52.38% have inadequate knowledge regarding the palliative care and 42.85%had moderately adequate knowledge and only 4.77% of the participants had adequate knowledge. Regarding attitude, Majority of the Nursing students i.e. 94.29% of students were having favorable attitude and 5.71% of students having unfavorable attitude towards palliative care. So, there is a need to pay special attention on the palliative care while teaching to the nursing students, as this is the part of their curriculum. Knowledge of the nursing students will affect their practice and care they will provide to the patient suffering any serious illness.

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