



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING NURSING LAWS AND ETHICS AMONG NURSES IN A SELECTED TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL, MANGALORE

Mrs. Amudhavalli. P

Lecturer, Dept of Community Health Nursing, Srinivas Institute of Nursing Sciences, Mangalore

Corresponding Author: Amudhavalli. P

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Laws and Ethics are moral principles that govern how the person or a group will behave or conduct themselves. The focus pertains to the right and wrong of actions and encompasses the decisions making process of determining the ultimate consequences of those actions. Safe nursing practice includes an understanding of the legal boundaries in which nurses must function. An understanding of laws and ethics are essential to the delivery of skilled professional care. It is vital that nurses appreciate the value of laws and ethics in their work. Laws and Ethics are relevant to clinical practice-based issues and affects all areas of professional nursing role. To apply laws and ethics effectively, nurses must develop reasoning skills and understand the concept and principles that assist legal and ethical analyses. A study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding nursing laws and ethics among nurses in selected tertiary care hospital. **Objectives of the study:** To assess the knowledge regarding laws in nursing among the nurses, to assess the knowledge regarding ethics in nurses among nurses, to find the association between nursing laws and ethics with selected demographic variables. **Methods:** The study was conducted at a selected tertiary care hospital, Mangalore. A Descriptive study method with a quantitative research approach was used for the study. The research design initiated was non-experimental descriptive research design. The sample size was 30. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the samples. The tool used for the data collection was questionnaire covering socio-demographic information and questions regarding laws and ethics. The statistical method used to analyse the data were by descriptive and inferential statistics. **Results:** The result shows that highest percentage (83.4) of the sample had average level of knowledge 10 % have good knowledge and 6.6% had poor knowledge regarding nursing laws and 63.4% had average level of knowledge, 13.3% had good knowledge and 23.3% had poor knowledge regarding nursing ethics. The chi-square and Yates correction computed between knowledge and selected demographic variables shows that there was significant association between demographic variables such as age, designation and there was no significant association between demographic variables such as gender, religion, marital status, qualification, experience and area of work. **Conclusion:** The findings show that there was significant association between knowledge and demographic variables such as age, designation and there was no significant association between knowledge and demographic variables such as gender, religion, marital status, qualification, experience and area of work.

Key Words: knowledge, nursing laws, ethics among nurses, tertiary care hospital

INTRODUCTION:

Ethics are moral principles that govern how the person or a group will behave or conduct themselves. The focus pertains to the right and wrong of actions and encompasses the decision-making process of determining the ultimate consequences of those actions. Safe nursing practice includes an understanding of the legal boundaries in which nurses must function. An understanding of ethics is essential to the delivery of skilled professional care. It is vital that nurses appreciate the value of ethics in their work.¹ Ethics refers to the consideration of standards of conduct or the study of philosophical ideas of right and wrong behaviour. A standard code of ethics developed for nurses have been adopted by International Council of Nurses (ICN) in 1953. The ICN code of ethics guides nurses to make decisions at work and it supports the patient's right to refuse care and treatment. Law can be defined as "the sum total of rules and regulation by which the society is governed".² According to the INC Code of Nursing Ethics includes Advocacy, Responsibility, Accountability and Confidentiality. Nurses should be sensitive to the ethical challenges and do their best to fulfil their moral duties. It also emphasizes the importance of informed consent and address main ethical issues in everyday practice such as respect to privacy and confidentiality of patients, clients, relationship with colleagues, efficient performance of the professional duties and protection of participants in research. The nurse's education, license and standard provide the framework by which nurses are expected to practice.³ Only the nurses will be able to protect themselves, nursing staffs and nursing faculty from legal risk. Legal responsibility in nursing practice is becoming of greater importance. Changes have occurred over the past decade in legal responsibilities of nurses. These reforms have led to attitude changes toward nurses by the legal, medical, and public realms. To avoid legal charges of negligence, nurses must keep abreast of the rapidly changing areas of instrumentation, documentation, and patient care. As staff nurses are providing comprehensive care to patients, they should have knowledge regarding legal terms, legal liability, legal responsibilities and basic rights in nursing; it would result in delivery of safe and competent care to the client.⁴ In developing country like India, all the hospital may not have continuing nursing education cell or the ethical and legal aspects are not highlighted. But the public awareness is increasing as a result of advancement in science and technology. Therefore, nurses working in the hospital also need to be updated with present knowledge on ethical and legal aspects in patient care. So, a study was carried with the objectives to assess the knowledge on legal and ethical aspects in patient care among staff nurses, find out the association between level of knowledge and selected demographic variables.⁵ A survey by the American Nurses Association (ANA) Centre for Ethics and Human Rights at the ANA Convention in 1994 reported that as high as 79% of their members were confronted with ethical issues on daily to weekly basis. To provide quality care and avoid liability, the nurse needs to be familiar with various consumer rights in health care system. It is vital to know the laws protecting the patient and the health care deliverer in this regard and also to be aware of the legal status as registered nurses.⁶ The researchers observe that a little study was done to assess nurse's knowledge regarding legal and ethical responsibilities and its applications in different nursing specialties, especially to nurses working in psychiatric departments; so, the researcher's intent to conduct this study is to assess if those nurses know and apply legal and ethical responsibilities.⁷

OBJECTIVES

- Assess the knowledge regarding laws in nursing among the nurses.
- Assess the knowledge regarding ethics in nursing among the nurses.
- Find the association between nursing laws and ethics with selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH APPROACH

Descriptive research can be described as a formal process adopted to observe and document aspects of situation as it naturally occurs and some time to serve as a starting point for hypothesis generation or theory development.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is a strategy for answering research questions, and its blueprint for collecting and analysing, and interpreting data. Descriptive design is used to describe the knowledge of nurses regarding nursing laws and ethics.

SETTING

Setting is the physical location and condition in which data collection takes place in study. The present study was conducted in Srinivas Hospital Mukka, Surathkal, Mangalore.

POPULATION

In this study the population comprises of 30 nursing staffs from Srinivas Hospital, Mukka, Surathkal who is present at the time of data collection.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

SAMPLE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The sample for the present study was 30 staff nurses from the tertiary care hospital, Mangalore, who meet the criteria.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Simple random sampling technique was adopted because the random sampling technique allows researchers to make generalization about a specific population and leave out any bias.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The demographic data were collected using a structured baseline Performa prepared by the investigator. The knowledge of staff nurse was assessed using structured questionnaire.

The method used for data collection was as follows:

- The research investigator introduced him to the subjects and established the good rapport with them.
- The consent was obtained from each staff nurses.
- Appropriate orientation was given to the subjects about the aim of the study, nature of the questionnaire and adequate care was taken for protecting the subjects from potential risk including maintaining confidentiality security and identity.
- Non probability sampling technique was used to give equal chance to each and every subjects.
- The socio demographic variables collected from the subject and used to assess the subject knowledge through structured questionnaire.
- Data collected was then tabulated and analysed.

PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Data will be analysed using both descriptive (frequency, percentage, range, mean, median, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi-square)

RESULTS

ORGANIZATION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

SECTION A: Description of demographic variables of staff nurses.

SECTION B: Analysis of knowledge of nurses regarding nursing laws and ethics.

SECTION C: Association between the knowledge scores of the nurses on nursing laws and ethics with the demographic variables.

SECTION A: DESCRIPTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES OF STAFF NURSES

The entire sample comprised of 30 staff nurses. The sample characteristics are described under the sub headings of age, gender, religion, marital status, academic qualification in nursing, designation, years of experience, present area of work

Table 1: DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLE OF THE SAMPLE

SL. No.	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Age	10	33.3
	a) 20-24	5	16.7
	b) 25-28	6	20.0
	c) 29-32	9	30.0
	d) 32 Above		
2	Gender		
	a) Male	25	83.3
	b) Female	5	16.7
3	Marital status		
	a) Married	18	60.0
	b) Unmarried	12	40.0
4	Religion		
	a) Christians	10	33.3
	b) Hindus	18	60.0
	c) Muslims	2	6.7

5	Qualification		
	a) BSc Nursing	16	53.3
	b) MSc Nursing	2	6.7
	c) Post BSc Nursing	1	3.3
	d) GNM	11	36.7
6	Designation		
	a) Senior Nurse	7	23.3
	b) Staff Nurse	16	53.3
	c) Ward in charge	7	23.3
7	Experience		
	a) Below 1 year	2	6.7
	b) 1- year	10	33.3
	c) 4-9 year	6	20.0
	d) Above 9 years	12	40.0
8	Area of work		
	a) Casualty	5	16.7
	b) ICU	6	20.0
	c) Ward	16	53.3
	d) OPD	3	10.0

Data presented in Table 1 shows the description of demographic characteristics of the sample

SECTION B: ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF STAFF NURSES REGARDING NURSING LAWS AND ETHICS.

Table 1: Knowledge level of staff nurses regarding nursing laws.

Level of knowledge	Range of scores	Percentage of score (%)	No. of response	Percentage of response
Poor	0 – 3	0 – 33	2	6.6
Average	4 – 7	34 – 66	25	83.4
Good	8- 11	67- 100	3	10
Total			30	100

The above table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge on nursing laws among the nurses. The level of knowledge seen in three categories poor, average and good.

Table 2: Knowledge level of staff nurses regarding nursing ethics.

Level of knowledge	Range of scores	Percentage of score (%)	No. Of response	Percentage of response
Poor	0 – 3	0 – 33	7	23.3
Average	4 – 7	34 – 66	19	63.3
Good	8- 11	67- 100	4	13.3
Total			30	100

The above table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge on nursing ethics among the nurses. The level of knowledge seen in three categories poor, average and good.

PART 1: Analysis of knowledge scores regarding nursing laws.

Table 3: Distribution of mean standard deviation and median of knowledge scores

Knowledge score	Max. score	Minimum Score	Mean Score	SD	Mean percentage
Percentage	9.00	1.00	5.5333	1.67607	18.444333%

Table 3 shows that the highest mean percentage of 18.444333% of knowledge score with a mean $\pm$ standard deviation of 1.67607 ± 5.5333 .

PART 2: Analysis of knowledge scores regarding nursing ethics

Table 4: Distribution of deviation and median of knowledge scores mean standard

Knowledge score	Max. score	Minimum Score	Mean Score	SD	Mean Percentage
Percentage	10	2	5.2000	2.04096	17.3333%

Table 4 shows that the highest mean percentage of 17.3333% of knowledge score with a mean $\pm$ standard deviation of 2.04096 ± 5.2000

SECTION C: BETWEEN THE KNOWLEDGE SCORES OF THE NURSES ON NURSING LAWS AND ETHICS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES.

This section deals with the between the knowledge scores of the nurses on nursing laws and ethics in association with the demographic variables in order to determine the association, a null hypothesis was formulated and chu-square test was used.

Table 3: chi-square value for selected demographic variable and mean knowledge scores.

SI No.	DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	KNOWLEDGE SCORES		Chi-square value	INFERENCE
		<Median	≥Median		
1	Age a.20-28years b.29 years above	12 5	3 10	6.652	Significant
2	Gender a. Male b. Female	14 3	11 2	.027	Not significant
3	Marital status a. Married b. Unmarried	11 6	7 6	.362	Not significant
4	Religion a. Christian b. Hindu	5 12	5 8	.271	Not significant
5	Qualification a. BSc. Nursing b. GNM	9 8	9 4	.814	Not significant

6	Designation				
	a. Senior nurse	4	3		
	b. Staff nurse	11	5	3.202	Significant
	c. Supervisor	2	5		
7	Experience				
	a. 1-3 year	6	6	.362	
	b. Above 1 year	11	7		Not significant
8	Area of work				
	a. Casualty	7	4	.344	Not significant
	b. Ward	10	9		

This study shows that there is no significant association between demographic variables such as gender, marital status, religion, qualification, experience and area of work. The obtained value in all these areas were lower than the table value ($\chi^2 = 2.045$, $p \leq 0.025$). Significant association was found between demographic variables such as age and designation where the obtained value ($p \geq 0.05$) was significantly higher than the table value.

DISCUSSION

SECTION- A: Description of demographic variables of staff nurses

SECTION-B: Analysis of knowledge level of staff nurses regarding laws and ethics in tertiary care hospital.

SECTION-C: Association between the knowledge scores and the demographic variables on knowledge of staff nurses regarding laws and ethics.

SECTION-A: DESCRIPTION OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

- Out of 30 staff nurses, about 33% staff nurses were in the age group of 20-24 years, 16.7% were in the age group of 24-28 years, 20% were in the age group of 28-32 years and 30% were in the age group of above 32 years.
- 83.3% were female staff nurses and 16.7% were male staff nurses.
- About 60% were married and 40% were unmarried.
- About 33.3% were Christians, 60% were Hindus and 6.7% were Muslims.
- 53.3% staff nurses were BSc nursing qualified, 6.7% were qualified in MSc nursing, 3.3% were qualified in post bsc, 36.7% were GNM qualified.
- About 23.3% were senior staff nurses, 53.3% were staff nurses, 23.3% were ward in-charges and 0% were supervisor.

- About 6.7% have less than one year of experience, 33.3% were experienced between 1-3 years, 20% have 4-9 years and 40% have above 9 years of experience.
- Present area of work_ 16.7% in casualty, 20% in ICU, 53.3% in ward, 10% in OPD

SECTION-B: ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF STAFF NURSES REGARDING LAWS AND ETHICS.

Findings show that highest percentage (83%) of the sample had an average level of knowledge, 10 % of the sample had good knowledge and 6.6 % of the sample had poor knowledge regarding laws in nursing, and 63.4% had an average level of knowledge 13.3% of the sample had good knowledge and 23.3% had poor knowledge regarding nursing ethics.

SECTION- C: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE KNOWLEDGE SCORES AND THE SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES REGARDING LAWS AND ETHICS IN NURSING

A study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding nursing laws and ethics among nurses in a selected tertiary care hospital in Mangalore. Descriptive study design was used for the study. A total of 30 samples were selected by using simple random sampling. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. This study shows that there is significant association between demographic variables such as gender, marital status, religion, qualification, experience and area of work. The obtained value in all these areas were lower than the table value ($\chi^2 = 2.045, p \leq 0.05$). Significant association was found between demographic variables such as age and designation where the obtained value ($p > 0.05$) was significantly higher than the table value.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was study to assess the knowledge regarding nursing laws and ethics among nurses in a selected tertiary care hospital, Mangalore.

- 33.3% nurses were in the age group of 20-24 years, 16.7% were in the age group of 24-28 years. 20.0% were in the age group of 28-32 years, and 30.0% were in the age group of above 32 years.
- Highest 83.3% were female nurses and only 16.7% were male nurses.
- 60.0% were married nurses and 40.0% were unmarried nurses.
- 33.3% were Christian, 60.0% were hindu, 6.7% were Muslim.
- 53.3% were BSc nursing staff's .36.7% were GNM staff's 6.7% were MSc nursing and 3.3% were post BSc nursing staff's
- 53.3% were staff nurses. 23.3% were senior staff nurses and 23.3% were ward in-charges.
- 6.7% were nurses with less than 1 year of experience 33.3% were nurses with 1-3 years of experiences 20.0% were with 4-9 year of experiences and 40.0% were nurses with more than 9 years of experiences.
- 16.7% nurses are working in casualty, 20.0% nurses are working in ICU. 53.3% nurses are working in ward and 10.0% nurses are working in OPD.

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