

Effect of Self-Learning module (SLM) on Knowledge regarding legal aspects of nursing care among nurses

Abstract

Every nurse must demonstrate safe and appropriate clinical practise in order to practise nursing care within legal constraints. It is essential to have up to date knowledge on legal implications of nursing care, to practice safe care. This study was performed to assess the effect of self-learning module (SLM) on knowledge regarding legal aspects of nursing care among nurses working in primary health centres(PHC).The Quantitative approach with one group, pre and post test design was used in this study. Fifty nurses working in primary health centres were selected using convenient sampling technique. A self – learning module (SLM) developed which refers to an independent learning material generated systematically by researchers on legal elements of patient care, such as admission and discharge procedures, protecting confidentiality, informed consent, common laws, and torts relating to patient care. The results show that the increase in knowledge level was significant at $p = 0.001$ in the post test. The gender ($p = 0.05$) and academic qualification and previous knowledge on legal aspects of patient care was significant at $p = 0.01$ level.

Keywords: Self-Learning module (SLM), Knowledge, legal aspects of nursing care, nurses

Introduction

Nursing is a compassionate practice with a direct impact on the lives, health, and well-being of individuals, families, and communities¹. Both ethical and legal concepts influence the nursing profession as tools for professional discipline, giving the nurse a general idea of what is expected of her as she transitions from the safe environment of school into society². The knowledge of nurses on law is necessary because nursing is concerned with providing services that affect human life and health, and some of the situations that a nurse encounters in practise pose dilemmas that, if not handled properly, can have negative consequences for the client and everyone involved. As a result, standards must be established to aid the nurse in conducting herself properly, making suitable decisions, and taking measures that are appropriate and safe for the client, thereby protecting herself against litigation¹.

Nursing practise is controlled to guarantee that nursing standards and scope are maintained in order to establish safe practises³. Clinical judgement is used in the delivery of care to help people to improve, maintain, or receive health, cope with health problems, and attain the highest possible quality of life⁴. Practical efficacy and ethical concern must be given equal weight in nursing practise². Apart from the interactive aspect of nursing practise, documenting of nursing activities is critical since it serves as legal tender for any nursing interaction or care. Nursing paperwork is frequently viewed as a legal matter that the nurse must approach with extreme caution⁵.

Nurses have key responsibilities within a health-care team, including providing treatment, making decisions, and ensuring patient confidentiality. Nurses may be challenged with legal and ethical difficulties as a result of modern technology. Furthermore, the laws, norms, and regulations that regulate nursing practise have an impact on the interaction between the nurse and the patient. Health care is at the centre of several other legal challenges. Patients nowadays are better educated, have higher expectations for the treatment they receive, and are more aware of their rights.

In a developing country like India, not every hospital has a continuing nursing education cell, and ethical and legal issues are often overlooked. However, scientific and technological advancements are raising public awareness. As a result, nurses working in hospitals must keep up to date on current ethical and legal issues in patient care. So, this study was done to assess the effect of self-learning module (SLM) on knowledge regarding

legal aspects of nursing care among nurses working in primary health centres(PHC), so that the nurses can have better knowledge and decision making ability on patient care.

Materials and Methods

The Quantitative approach with one group, pre and post test design was used in this study among 50 nurses working in primary health centres of a selected district of Tamilnadu. The samples were selected using convenient sampling technique. A self – learning module (SLM) developed which refers to an independent learning material generated systematically by researchers on legal elements of patient care, such as admission and discharge procedures, protecting confidentiality, informed consent, common laws, and torts relating to patient care. The tool was developed and it consisted of two sections such as socio demographic variables and structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge of nursing students regarding the legal aspects of patient care. The ethical permission and consent was obtained from all the samples after explaining the whole process of the study and their freedom of withdrawal from the study at any point of time. The pre-test was conducted through the self administered questionnaire followed by the SLM regarding legal aspects of nursing care and doubts of nurses were clarified on the same day. After 2 weeks, the posttest was conducted. The analysis of results was done by descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results and Discussion

The majority of the subjects (64 %) were under the age of 25 years, 72 % were female nurses and only 28% were males. In terms of educational status, 42 percent had GNM, 52 percent had B.Sc Nursing, six percent had M.Sc Nursing degree. The distribution of respondents by clinical experience revealed that 86% percent had less than 5 years of experience and 14 percent had more than 5 years of experience.

Table 1: Distribution of level of knowledge of nurses on legal aspects of nursing care

Score range	Percentage (%)		P -values
	Pretest	Post test	
Excellent (16-20)	12	84	18.41; p=0.001 ***
Good (11-15)	14	14	
Average (6-10)	22	2	
Poor (< 5)	52	0	
Total	100	100	

According to the table 1, the nurses with excellent knowledge increased from 12 % to 84% after the SLM among the nurses. The nurses with good level of knowledge also increased after the self learning module. The level of increase in knowledge was significant at $p = 0.001$ level. Similar findings were reported in few studies^{6,7} which conclude that the in-service education has significantly improved the level of knowledge of nurses. So, frequent need based training to be given to all the nurses to improve their knowledge, attitude and practice by which the quality of health care can be improved.

Table 2: Association of post test knowledge with socio – demographic variables of nurses

Socio-Demographic Variables	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	
Age					0.91 (NS)
21 -25	71.4%	14.2%	14.2%	0	
26 -30	100%	0	0	0	
31 - 35	88.9%	11.1%	0	0	
>35	78.3%	21.7%	0	0	
Gender					0.041*
Male	91.7%	4.17%	4.17%	0	
Female	77%	23%	0	0	
Previous knowledge on Legal aspects of Patient care					0.01**
Yes	96.6%	3.4%	0	0	
No	66.7%	28.6%	4.7%	0	
Educational Qualification					0.01**
Basic degree	66.6%	16.7%	16.7%	0	
B.Sc	88.2%	11.8%	0	0	
M.Sc	84%	16%	0	0	
Years of Experience					0.841(NS)
< 5 years	66.7%	33.3%	0	0	
> 5 yearss	93.8%	3.1%	3.1%	0	

There was no statistically significant relationship between knowledge level and age and years of experience of the nurses. The gender ($p = 0.05$) and academic qualification and previous knowledge on legal aspects of patient care was significant at $p = 0.01$ level. A study conducted in India, on the other hand, found a substantial link between knowledge level and factors (age, gender, professional qualification, and experience)⁹ Nurses working in general wards have a higher degree of expertise than those working in specialty wards, according to this study, which is similar to a study conducted in Eastern Nepal's Tertiary Care Hospital¹⁰.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the SLM improves the level of knowledge of nurses though they had less knowledge in the pretest. Hence, the need based education to be explored and given to the nurses so that it can improve the quality of nursing care to the patients.

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