

**A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND NEED OF
FORENSIC NURSING AMONG THE REGISTERED NURSES IN A MEDICO-LEGAL
PERSPECTIVE-CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY IN INDIA: AN IMMEDIATE NEED FOR
THE PROSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF A HANDBOOK.**

Ms. Kashish Malhotra, M.Sc. Forensic Nursing, School of Medico-legal Studies, National forensicSciences University, Gandhinagar.

Mr. Rajveer Singh Khatodiya, M.Sc. Forensic Nursing, SMLS, NFSU, Gandhinagar.

Dr. G. Rajesh Babu, Professor and Dean, SMLS, NFSU, Gandhinagar.

Dr. Naresh Kumar Soni⁴ Assistant Professor, SMLS, NFSU, Gandhinagar.

ABSTRACT :

The study aimed to assess the knowledge and need for forensic nursing among Registered Nurses in India. Forensic nursing, a specialty at the intersection of healthcare and legal systems, plays a crucial role in managing medico-legal cases. Despite its significance, awareness and formal training in forensic nursing remain limited in India. It was a Cross-sectional study design. 395 Registered Nurses were selected by using convenient sampling. Participants included selected Registered Nurses from across India, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of their knowledge and the perceived need for forensic nursing. The study revealed that most RNs fell within the 26–30 years age group (31%), with the least representation from the 31–35 years bracket (15%). A gender distribution showed a predominance of females (68%). Educational qualifications indicated that 49% of nurses held a bachelor's degree, while 4% had other qualifications. Most participants (43%) had 1–5 years of work experience. Employment data highlighted that 46% of the nurses worked in private hospitals, while 49% were employed in private colleges. Knowledge levels were high, with 91% demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of forensic nursing, and 85% acknowledging nurses' involvement in patients' legal management. Despite this, only 20% had received formal education in the subject, and 46% had never managed medico-legal cases. The study showed that 76.5% of participants had sufficient knowledge of forensic nursing, with 93.7% agreeing on its necessity in India. Correlations were observed between educational qualifications, work experience, and knowledge levels, while factors like age, gender, and job positions showed no significant association. The study highlights the growing demand for forensic nursing in India, emphasizing the need for practical training and exposure. Although RNs exhibit a strong understanding of forensic nursing, the absence of structured education and career progression mechanisms limits their professional development in this field. The findings underscore the importance of integrating forensic nursing into the healthcare curriculum and policy frameworks to address this gap. This research provides a foundation for policy interventions, curriculum changes, and the establishment of institutionalized training programs, paving the way for the effective integration of forensic nursing into the healthcare system in India.

Keywords: Forensic, Forensic Nursing, Registered Nurses, Medico-Legal, Handbook.

INTRODUCTION:

Forensic nursing emerged as a specialized field to address the unique needs of individuals affected by violence, abuse, and trauma. It combines principles of nursing and forensic science to provide care, gather evidence, and contribute to the justice system.

The introduction of forensic nursing in India by the Indian Nursing Council in 2020 marked a significant step toward addressing the country's growing need for skilled professionals in medico-legal care.

Forensic nurses are trained to perform critical roles such as evidence collection, victim advocacy, and expert testimony, emphasizing their importance in handling cases of sexual assault, domestic

violence, and other crimes. The inclusion of forensic nursing in healthcare practice enhances the efficiency of managing medico-legal cases, contributing to both patient care and justice delivery. A nurse handling an MLC case must be attentive and documented appropriately while providing primary life-saving treatment to the patient. These make a doctor avoid bogus allegations and save themselves from undignified situations in court and subsequent legal issues². Medical-legal knowledge is vital to all medical professionals, irrespective of specialties, since the law is common to all. It is really indispensable for every medical professional to update oneself with some knowledge of law, understand clearly and work successfully with a proper confidence to override the fear of MLC cases.

PROBLEM STATEMENT :

A Comprehensive Study to Assess the Knowledge and Need of Forensic Nursing Among the Registered Nurses in a Medico-Legal Perspective-Cross Sectional Study In India: An Immediate Need For The Prospective Development Of a Handbook.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY :

- To assess the knowledge regarding Forensic Nursing among Registered Nurses in India.
- To assess the need of Forensic Nursing among Registered Nurses in India.
- To assess the association between knowledge of Registered Nurses with their selected demographic variables.
- To develop a Handbook as per the requirement of the promoting understanding educating regarding Forensic Nursing.

Material and Methods

Research approach:

This study employs a Quantitative Research Approach.

Research design:

A Descriptive Cross-Sectional research design was utilized in this study.

Population:

The population in the study encompassed Registered Nurses all over in India

Research Sample:

Registered Nurses

Sampling Size & Sample-

395, Registered Nurses.

Sampling Technique—

- The study used a non-probability convenient sampling technique.

Research Tools

The study tool was divided into two sections:

- **SECTION-A**= Demographic Tool: This part consists of variables such as Age, Gender, Education Qualification, Year of Experience in Nursing, Designation/Position, Organization, Are you aware about term of forensic nursing?, Have you handled any medico-legal cases?, Have you received any formal training in forensic nursing?, Are you aware that forensic nurses can play a major role in management of medico-legal cases?.
- **SECTION-B** = Knowledge Questionnaire to assess the knowledge and need of Forensic Nursing.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS :

The data collection procedure started with ethical approval from the ethical committee. With the necessary documentation, an informed consent form was developed for all the participants. Consent forms were obtained from the participants in online mode. The convenient sampling technique was used based on inclusion criteria. The total sample size was 395 participants.

RESULTS :

Study was conducted among conducted 395 study participants, of which 192(49%) were having complete their B.Sc. Nursing, were 172(44%) M.Sc. Nursing. Most 123(31%) were in the age group of 26 to 30 years and 269 were females. (Table 1).

Table No. 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of socio-demographic variables.

N=395

Variables	Demographic Characteristics	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)	20 to 25 years	107	27%
	26 to 30 years	123	31%
	31 to 35 years	60	15%
	35 years and above	105	27%
Gender	Male	126	32%
	Female	269	68%
	Transgender	0	0%
Education Qualification	Diploma in Nursing	15	4%
	Bachelor's degree in nursing	192	49%
	Master's degree in nursing	172	44%
	Other	16	4%
Years of Experience in Nursing	Less than 1 year	70	18%
	1 to 5 years	169	43%
	6 to 10 years	51	13%
	More than 10 years	105	27%
Designation/Position:	Staff Nurse/ In charge Sister	180	46%
	Tutor/ Clinical Instructor	81	21%
	Assistant Professor/ Associate Professor/ Professor	95	24%
	Other	39	10%
Organization	Government Hospital	93	24%
	Government College	33	8%
	Private Hospital	74	19%

	Private College	195	49%
Are you aware about term of forensic nursing?	No	37	9%
	Yes	358	91%
Have you handled any medico-legal cases?	No	180	46%
	Yes	215	54%
Have you received any formal training in forensic nursing?	No	317	80%
	Yes	78	20%
Information about forensic nurses role in legal management	No	335	85%
	Yes	60	15%

The results presented focus on the analysis of data collected from 395 registered nurses in India regarding their knowledge and need for forensic nursing. It divided into three sections, each addressing specific objectives.

Section A assesses the demographic data of the participants, while Section B utilizes a self-structured questionnaire to evaluate the knowledge and awareness of forensic nursing. The analysis for these sections involved calculating frequency and percentage distributions to summarize the data effectively.

Table No 2: Table Showing Association of Scores and Demographic Variables

N=395

CRITERIA MEASURE OF NEED		
LEVEL OF SCORES	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY
ADEQUATE NEED. (13-19)	76.5%	302
MODERATE NEED. (7-12)	22.8%	90
INADEQUATE NEED. (0-6)	0.8%	3

Maximum =19 Minimum=0

Table No. 3: Frequency & Percentage distribution need of Forensic Nursing among Registered Nurses in India.

N=395

Variables	Options	Percentage(%)	Frequency(f)
According to you, What is the need of Forensic Nurses in India?	No	6.3%	25
	Yes	93.7%	370

In Section C, the study examines the association between the knowledge of registered nurses and their selected demographic variables using the chi-square test. This statistical method was employed to determine if there were significant relationships between the scores of knowledge and various demographic factors, such as age, gender, and education level. The findings from these tables highlight the critical need for enhanced training and education in forensic nursing, as well as the importance of understanding how demographic variables influence knowledge levels among healthcare professionals.

This section deals with the findings related to the association between score and selected demographic variables. The chi-square test was used to determine the association between the score levels and selected demographic variables.

Table No 4: Table Showing Association of Scores and Demographic Variables

N=395

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA		LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE			ASSOCIATION WITH KNOWLEDGE SCORE				
Variables	Demographic Characteristics	ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE	MODERATE KNOWLEDGE	INADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE	Chi Square Test	P Value	df	Table Value	Result
Age (in years)	20 to 25 years	78	29	0	11.417	0.076	6	12.592	Not Significant
	26 to 30 years	88	32	3					
	31 to 35 years	50	10	0					
	31 to 35 years	86	19	0					
Gender	Male	97	27	2	1.825	0.401	2	5.991	Not Significant
	Female	205	63	1					
	Transgender	0	0	0					
Education Qualification	Diploma in Nursing	7	8	0	15.650	0.016	6	12.592	Significant
	Bachelor's Degree in Nursing	141	48	3					
	Master's Degree in Nursing	139	33	0					
	Other	15	1	0					
Years of Experience in Nursing	Less than 1 year	44	25	1	15.826	0.015	6	12.592	Significant
	1 to 5 years	126	41	2					
	6 to 10 years	40	11	0					
	More than 10 years	92	13	0					

Designation/ Position:	Staff Nurse/ Incharge Sister	133	45	2	4.040	0.671	6	12.59 2	Not Significa nt
	Tutor/ Clinical Instructor	60	20	1					
	Assistant Professor/ Associate Professor/ Professor	76	19	0					
	Other	33	6	0					
Organization	Government Hospital	73	18	2	6.903	0.330	6	12.59 2	Not Significa nt
	Government College	26	7	0					
	Private Hospital	51	23	0					
	Private College	152	42	1					
Are you aware about term of forensic nursing?	No	24	12	1	4.415	0.110	2	5.991	Not Significa nt
	Yes	278	78	2					
Have you handled any medico-legal cases?	No	132	46	2	2.074	0.354	2	5.991	Not Significa nt
	Yes	170	44	1					
Have you received any formal training in forensic nursing?	No	247	67	3	3.103	0.212	2	5.991	Not Significa nt
	Yes	55	23	0					
Information about forensic nurses role in legal management	No	35	24	1	13.008	0.001	2	5.991	Significa nt
	Yes	267	66	2					

Shows association between knowledge of Registered Nurses and their selected demographic variables. Chi square was used to find out the association. There is significant association of Education qualification of Nurses and their year of experience in Nursing and no significant association of age, gender, designation, Organization, Are you aware about term of forensic nursing?, Have you handled any medico-legal cases?, Have you received any formal training in forensic nursing?

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY :

- In the present study sample size of 395 Registered Nurses was selected by using convenient sampling technique. The ages of study sample ranged from 26-30 years of age, of which 32% were male and 68% were female whereas a study was conducted among registered nurses. Sample sizes of 395 nurses were selected by randomization.
- The study found that the nursing workforce is predominately young, with 31 percent of

registered nurses aged 26-30 having some kind of gender imbalance. This compares to the youngest age group of 31-35 years (15%), with 68% of female and 32% of male participants. The majority (49%) held a bachelor's degree in education. nurse while only 4% have other qualifications. Experience was concentrated between 1-5 years (43%) and the majority of nurses (46%) had professional nurse/sister status.

- Most work at private colleges (49%). Awareness of forensic nursing is high (91%). However, only 54% are familiar with medical legal issues, with 46% reporting a lack of experience in forensic nursing. Dealing with those problems Formal training in forensic nursing was limited to 20% of respondents, while 85% demonstrated knowledge of the role of forensic nurses in legal management.
- In the present study, it had been found that among 395 sample size, 78% of the respondent were knowledge of Forensic Nursing among Registered Nurses in India. Similar results were observed in other study which was being conducted among 134 students of MGM New Bombay College of Nursing. Results of that study showed that 64.17% of the respondents were knowledge about the forensic Nursing.
- In this present study, 93.7% respondent are say that the need of Forensic Nurses in India. Similarly, in another study major factor leading that various respondent are say that the need of Forensic Nurses in King George Hospital, Vishakhapatnam.

DISCUSSION :

In the present study sample size of 395 Registered Nurses was selected by using convenient sampling technique. The ages of study sample ranged from 26-30 years of age, of which 32% were male and 68% were female whereas a study was conducted among registered nurses. Sample sizes of 395 nurses were selected by randomization. The study found that the nursing workforce is predominately young, with 31 percent of registered nurses aged 26-30 having some kind of gender imbalance. This compares to the youngest age group of 31-35 years (15%), with 68% of female and 32% of male participants. The majority (49%) held a bachelor's degree in education. nurse while only 4% have other qualifications. Experience was concentrated between 1-5 years (43%) and most nurses (46%) had professional nurse status. Most work at private colleges (49%). Awareness of forensic nursing is high (91%). However, only 54% are familiar with medical legal issues, with 46% reporting a lack of experience in forensic nursing. Dealing with those problems Formal training in forensic nursing was limited to 20% of respondents, while 85% demonstrated knowledge of the role of forensic nurses in legal management. In the present study, it had been found that among 395 sample size, 78% of the respondent were knowledge of Forensic Nursing among Registered Nurses in India. Similar results were observed in another study which was being conducted among 134 students of MGM New Bombay College of Nursing. Results of that study showed that 64.17% of the respondents were knowledge about forensic Nursing.

CONCLUSION :

This study of registered nurses in India shows high awareness of forensic nursing (91%) but limited practical experience (54%) and formal training (20%). Most nurses (93.7%) unrecognized the need for forensic nursing, reflecting its potential in addressing medico-legal cases. Educational qualifications and experience were significantly associated with knowledge, but other factors like age and designation were not. The findings highlight the urgent need for enhanced training and integration of forensic nursing into routine healthcare practice.

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