

ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE OF COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS OF GERIATRICS AMONG NURSING STUDENTS AT SELECTED NURSING COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

“Geriatrics” is the branch of medicine dealing with the physiologic characteristics of aging and the diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting the aged. In most of the countries in the world including India, the cut-off point for geriatric age is 60 years.¹The physiological decline in ageing refers to the physical changes an individual experiences because of the decline in the normal functioning of the body resulting in poor mobility, vision, hearing, inability to eat and digest food properly, a decline in memory, the inability to control certain physiological functions, and various chronic conditions. Change in socio-economic status adversely affects the individual's way of life after retirement.² Common health problems of geriatrics are Arthritis, Hypertension, Cataract, Diabetes mellitus, Osteoporosis, Bone diseases, Varicose veins, Skin integrity, Hearing loss, Vision problems, Depression, Alzheimer's diseases, Memory loss etc. In its latest report, the Census Bureau said the world's 65-and-older population is projected to increase from 516 million in 2009 to 1.53 billion in 2050. From 2009 to 2050, the world's 85 and older population is projected to increase more than fivefold, from 40 million to 219 million.³

Aim

The main aim of the study is to find out the knowledge regarding geriatric health problems and find the association between knowledge of Nursing Students regarding common health problems of geriatric with their selected demographic variables.

Methodology

The descriptive study was conducted in a Nursing College in Vadodara. The sample consisted of 50 Nursing Students. The tools used for data collection was a set demographic variables such as Age, gender, occupation, education qualification, monthly income

demographic area, to assess the knowledge; approximately 34 questions will be used to assess the knowledge on common health problems of geriatrics prepared by investigator after extensive review of literature. In the data gathering process, a questionnaire was administered to the Nursing Students to assess their knowledge regarding geriatric health problems

Interpretation

The results showed that out of 50 Nursing Students, 78% have moderately adequate knowledge, 12% have inadequate knowledge and, 10% have adequate knowledge. The finding shows that there is no significant association between any demographic variables with the knowledge of common health problems of geriatrics among the Nursing Students of selected Nursing College at Vadodara.

Conclusion

As it is found through this descriptive survey that only 10% of the Nursing Students have adequate knowledge but 78% of them have moderately adequate knowledge. This emphasizes that since a community health nurse can play a major role in providing health education & thus aid in prevention and control of common health problems in geriatric care, there is a need of providing more detailed education to the Nursing Students regarding common health problems of geriatric.

Key Words: - Assess, Knowledge, Nursing Students, Geriatrics, Common Health Problems

BACKGROUND

“You Do Not Heal Old Age; You Protect It; You Promote It; You Extend It.”¹

-Sir James Sterling Ross

World Health Organization defines “health” as a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”⁴

“Geriatrics” is the branch of medicine dealing with the physiologic characteristics of aging and the diagnosis and treatment of diseases affecting the aged. In most of the countries in the world including India, the cut-off point for geriatric age is 60 years. Geriatrics grows increasingly important as modern medicine and rising standard of living have lengthened life expectancy, resulting in increased proportion of aged persons in society. The age-related decline in muscle strength, vision, memory, locomotion, nutrition, immunity and homeostasis progress slowly. However, the onset of disease may be abrupt, the course of illness varying,

complications severe and dreadful. Many chronic diseases increase in prevalence with age and some elderly seem more susceptible to co-occurring problems compared to others.⁵

The physiological decline in ageing refers to the physical changes an individual experiences because of the decline in the normal functioning of the body resulting in poor mobility, vision, hearing, inability to eat and digest food properly, a decline in memory, the inability to control certain physiological functions, and various chronic conditions. Change in socio-economic status adversely affects the individual's way of life after retirement. The economic loss is due to a change from salary to pension or unemployment leading to economic dependency on children or relatives. A feeling of low self-worth may be felt due to the loss of earning power and social recognition. This state of mind is harmful. With the prospect of this situation worsening in the coming decades, ways and means of managing the stress effectively needs to be examined.⁶The Indian aged population is currently the second largest in the world, the first being china with more than 150 million.⁷

OBJECTIVES

1.To assess knowledge regarding common health problems of geriatrics among Nursing Students.

2. To find out the association between knowledge of Nursing Students regarding common health problems of geriatric with their selected demographic variables.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Quantitative research approach with Descriptive Research Design is applied for the conduction of this study. The setting for this study was proposed to be in selected Nursing College of Vadodara and study samples were taken from there.

ANALYSIS

Table 1:-Distribution of respondent according to Knowledge Level

LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGE SCORE	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Inadequate Knowledge	6	12 %
Moderately Adequate Knowledge	39	78 %
Adequate Knowledge	5	10 %
Total	50	100 %

Table 2:- Mean, Standard Deviation, And Mean Percentage of The Knowledge Score of Nursing Students

VARIABLE	MAX KNOWLEDGE SCORE	MEAN KNOWLEDGE SCORE	STANDARD DEVIATION	MEAN PERCENTAGE
KNOWLEDGE	34	18.52	4.79	54.47%

Table 1 Presents A Majority of 78% of Nursing Students are Having Moderately Adequate Knowledge, 12% of them are Having Inadequate Knowledge And 10% of them are Having Adequate Knowledge.

Table 2 Reveals was the maximum Overall Knowledge Score was **34**. The Mean Knowledge score of samples is **18.52**, standard deviation is 4.79 and mean percentage is **54.47%**.

Also the data analysis reveals that **none** of the demographic variables of the Nursing Students are having association with their knowledge scores.

DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the level of knowledge at large regarding the common health problems among the Nursing Students was Moderately Adequate. Another study conducted by Joel Faronbi puts forward the finding that the Nursing Students have positive perception and attitude as well as good knowledge towards the care of the older adults and these should be reinforced to enhance a better clinical outcome in the care of the older adults.⁸ Ferreira and Ruiz (2012) gave the opinion that there is a lacuna of educational training among the Nursing Graduates.⁹ This was backed by Doherty, Mitchell, and O'Neill (2011) who concluded in recent times, the healthcare services for the older adults have been severely affected by the negative stereotypic attitudes and misconceptions of nurses with 63% of geriatrics expressing an unsatisfactory health care. This can be avoided if proper geriatric education is provided to the nursing students during their educational training.¹⁰ Alsenany, (2009)¹¹ and Oyetunde et al.¹², (2013) have researched on the attitudes of nursing students, staff and other health care professionals towards older people and their care and have identified negative attitudes towards geriatric care among them. Also, Eltantawy (2013) emphasized that the nursing students have developed a bias about caring for older people, and their study showed that

nurses had very minimal interest in working at Geriatric Nursing Care Homes.¹³ All these discussion strongly puts for point that there is a need of giving more emphasis on geriatric nursing in the Nursing Syllabus so that the Nursing Students Develop Adequate Knowledge And Positive Attitude Towards Geriatric Care.

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