

Awareness on Client's Rights and its Associated Factors among Nurses Working in Hospital of Lumbini Province

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ABSTRACT

Background: The client enters the health care delivery service with needs, concerns and expectations, requiring various interventions. In order to provide quality care that meets the client's needs and increase his/her satisfaction, the client's views must be respected and his preferences taken into consideration. Respecting the individual's rights is the vital responsibility of nurses in addition to their basic responsibilities with holistic health care services. Protecting the client's rights by the nurses only will be possible when they have gained necessary knowledge on it and suitable conditions be provided for respecting these rights. The aim of the study was to assess the level of awareness on client rights and its associated factors among nurses working in a hospital of Lumbini Province.

Methods : A descriptive cross sectional research design was employed for the study. Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study among nurses working in different wards of tertiary hospital. Self-administered structured questionnaire was used to collect data after taking informed consent. Collected data from the interview were edited, coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS-16 version) for analysis. Data was analyzed by employing both descriptive (frequency, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistical methods (Logistic regression and chi-square test).

Results : The average age of the respondents was 30 years with Mean \pm SD = 30.8 \pm 9.5 and more than half of them belong to the ethnic group Brahmin (59%). Nearly two thirds of them were married (62.7%) and more than half (59%) of the respondents had less than 5 years of working experience in their respective areas. The results showed that nearly two-thirds of respondents had an adequate level of awareness regarding clients' rights. There was no statistically significant association between level of awareness with the sociodemographic variables.

Conclusion : The study revealed that nurses who participated in the study had adequate level of knowledge on client's right while over one-third of them had inadequate levels of awareness regarding clients' rights. It was clear that after becoming a registered nurse, the majority of nurses were not informed about clients' rights. It is recommended that continuing education programs for nurses concentrate on raising their understanding of clients' rights and emphasizing the significance of it to provide quality care.

Keywords: Client's right, knowledge, nurses

INTRODUCTION

A patient is anyone who has requested to be evaluated by or who is being evaluated by any health care professional. The term 'client' is most often used as a synonym for a 'patient' who receives health care in any healthcare setting, especially when health maintenance rather than illness care is the primary service provided.¹

Client rights have been the integral part of modern health care system.² Identifying and providing appropriate care to meet these needs in a cost-effective way without compromising the standard of care is one of the challenges facing health care providers today. Other challenges facing them include consumer's demands, professional demand for excellence, high cost of health care and demographic shifts. In order to provide quality care that meets the client's needs and increase his satisfaction the client's views must be respected and his preferences taken into consideration.³ Client's rights are essential pillars to provide a good health care and to promote ethical medical practices. It measures and protects patients against abuse and discrimination. It is an important part of modern health practice.⁴

According to World Health Organization (WHO), patient's rights vary in different countries depending on the prevailing local cultural and social norms. Despite the debate about how to conceive of the provider-patient relationship, there is growing international consensus that all patients have a fundamental right to privacy, autonomy of decision, and access to information.⁴

The concept of client's rights is often misused, overused and abused. Our society tends to take rights for granted. When clients are admitted to short-term acute care agencies or extended care facility, they are also entitled to certain rights. In 1972, the American Hospital Association (AHA) established a Patient's Bill of Rights which outlined the rights and responsibilities of clients receiving care in hospitals. The document revised in 1992, increased health care providers' awareness of the need to treat clients in an ethical manner and encouraged all health care providers to protect the rights of clients.⁵ A study was conducted on "knowledge and attitude of nursing personnel regarding patient safety and rights" in government and private hospitals of Delhi in 2012 Nov-Dec. Sample size was 200 (100 each from government and private), using structured knowledge questionnaire.⁶ The study showed that majority of nursing staff working in private hospitals had greater knowledge about patient safety and rights.⁶ In conclusion, the nurses working in governmental hospitals had low knowledge regarding patient's safety and rights.⁶

According to patient's right charter, patient's rights include: Every patient has a right to: healthy and safe environment, participation in decision-making, access

to health care, knowledge of one's health, insurance/medical aid scheme, choice of health services, treated by a named health care provider, confidentiality and privacy, informed consent, refusal of treatment, a second opinion, continuity of care, complaints about health services.⁷

Managers of medical health care centers are responsible for the protection of client's rights. Respecting the individual's rights is another responsibility of nurses in addition to their basic and principal responsibilities to provide the clients with proper health care services. Knowing and applying the patient's rights by the nurses increases patient's trust and satisfaction. Protecting the patient's rights by the nurse¹⁰ will be possible when they have gained necessary knowledge about it and suitable conditions be provided for respecting these rights.⁸

Today, clients must be active participants in their own care, rather than just being passive recipients of services. This requires enhanced awareness by both patients and practitioners. Modern healthcare can best be provided when there is active cooperation between the two groups.⁹ However, clients particularly in developing countries remain submissive, had poor knowledge of their rights, and those even with good knowledge cannot claim their rights in a health care system and regard it as a favor from health care setting and staff rather than their rights.¹⁰

Health care professional especially nurses are always in close contact with patients to provide care. For the provision of quality of care, nurses should have not only the knowledge of disease but also have the knowledge and be aware of client's right. Nurses play an important role to implement and maintain client rights.¹¹ As a nurse, the researcher was interested to know how much the hospitalized patients aware about their rights.

Appropriate care and observing patient's rights require nurses' knowledge and which would be possible through different ways such as side studies, retraining courses, and academic courses during education. Therefore, protection of patient's rights is very important. Many studies are conducted in different countries but only limited studies are conducted in our setting. That's why, the researcher felt the need of this study. So, this study assesses awareness regarding client's rights and its associated factors among nurses working in a hospital of Lumbini province.

METHODS

Descriptive cross-sectional research design was used to find out the awareness regarding client's rights among nurses in different ward of Bheri hospital of Lumbini province where data was collected at single point of time; a tertiary hospital having higher flow of patients

of this Province. A total of enumeration method was used and who were available and willing to participate in the study were included in the study. Self-administered structured questionnaire was administered among nurses during their break time which consisted of two sections: 1. Socio- demographic information and 2. Awareness on client right related questionnaire.

Validity of the instrument was established by developing the instruments on the basis of literature review, seeking the opinion of subject experts and research expert. Reliability was established by split-half method. The 10% of the total sample size i.e. 15 nurses of another hospital located in the Lumbini Province. After pre-test, revisions were made as required according to objectives of the study.

Collected data were checked for its completeness and accuracy. The data was organized, coded and entered in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 for further analysis. The descriptive analysis such as frequencies, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used. In inferential statistics Chi-square test and logistic regression was used with (p-value <0.05) at 95% confidence interval (CI).

The ethical approval letter was obtained from the Nepal Health Research Council (Ref. No. 2384/2023). The permission letter was obtained from Provincial health office (Ref. No. 671/2079-80). Verbal and written informed consent were obtained prior to data collection from each participant. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by keeping code numbers and using findings only for the research purpose without revealing personal identity.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents among which the average age of the participants was 30 years (standard deviation =9.5) and more than half of them belong to the ethnic group Brahmin (59%). Nearly two thirds of them were married (62.7%) and more than half (59%) of the respondents had less than 5 years of working experience in their respective areas.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by socio-demographic characteristics n=104

Variables	Number	Percent
Age (in years)		
≤ 30	66	62.9
>30	39	37.1
Mean ±SD = 30.8±9.5		
Ethnicity		
Dalit	5	4.8
Newar	5	4.8
Madhesi	6	5.7
Janajati	26	24.8
Brahmin /Chhetri	62	59.0
Educational status		
ANM	34	32.4
PCL	46	43.8
Bachelor’s degree	18	17.1
Master’s degree	6	5.7
Marital status		
Married	70	66.7
Unmarried	31	29.5
Divorce	1	1.0
Widow	2	1.9
Type of residence		
Urban	71	67.6
Rural	33	31.4
Working experience		
≤ 5 years	62	59.0
6-10 years	17	16.2
11-15 years	8	7.6
>15 years	17	16.2
Source of information		
Books	65	61.9
Mass media	23	21.9
Others	16	15.3

Table 2 depicts that nearly two-thirds of respondents had an adequate level of awareness regarding clients’ rights.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Awareness regarding Client's Rights n=104

Variables	Number	Percent
Adequate (≥75%)	68	64.8
Inadequate (<75%)	36	34.3

Table 3 shows that there was no statistically significant association between level of awareness with the sociodemographic variables.

Table 3: Association between level of awareness regarding client's right with sociodemographic variables n=104

Variables	Awareness level		p - value
	Adequate N(%)	Inadequate N(%)	
Age (in years)			0.07
≤ 30	39 (59.1)	27 (40.9)	
>30	29 (76.3)	9 (23.7)	
Ethnicity			0.82
Brahmin /Chhetri	40 (74)	14(25.9)	
Others	28 (56)	22(44)	
Marital status			0.91
Married	46(65.7)	24 (34.2)	
Others	22(64.7)	12 (35.2)	
Educational status			0.46
ANM	14 (51.8)	13 (48.1)	
PCL	21 (61.7)	13 (48.1)	
Bachelor's and Master's degree	33 (76.7)	10(23.2)	
Working experience (in years)			0.16
≤15	54 (62.1)	33 (37.9)	
>15	14 (82.4)	3 (17.6)	
Residence			1.00
Urban	46(64.8)	25 (35.2)	
Rural	22 (66.7)	11 (33.3)	
Source of information			0.11
Books and media	54 (61.3)	34 (38.6)	
Others	11 (68.7)	5 (31.2)	

* *p-value significant at < 0.05*

DISCUSSION

The study included 104 nurses working in all wards of Bheri Hospital, Nepalgunj. This study revealed that out of 104 respondents, nearly two-thirds of respondents had an adequate level of awareness while more than one-third of them had an inadequate level of awareness regarding clients' rights. It is not a desirable outcome for a profession like nursing since, it has an impact on how they practice, which in turn has an impact on how patients are treated.

The result findings are in contrast with the study findings which show that majority of (75.4%) respondents have an inadequate level of knowledge. Whereas inline, a study shows the majority of the (76.8%), participants had adequate knowledge of most of the items of the patient's bill of rights.¹¹

On the other hand, the current study indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between level of awareness with age, marital status, place of

residence, ethnic group, educational status, and working experience. Similar to these findings, a study shows that there was no statistically significant relationship between the level of awareness with age, marital status, place of residence, ethnic group, educational status, and working experience.^{11,12} In contrast, a study revealed that the knowledge of patients' rights of nurses with a master's degree and those with more than ten years' experience were significantly higher than that of nurses with other qualifications significant relationship between nurses' knowledge of patients' rights between the working areas ($p < 0.05$).¹⁴

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the nurses who are working in the hospital had better knowledge about clients right however, nurses did not receive any formal training on client's right. Health personals play key role in providing health information to the patients. So, the awareness/ advocacy program for the client's right should be conducted through formal and non-formal education and training to the nurses. Material

such as pamphlets, flashcards, posters regarding client's rights can be placed on each ward of the hospital which may add the information on it. The study was conducted among nurses working in only one governmental hospital of Nepal. In order to increase the generalization of the findings, the study could be conducted among more samples and in multiple settings.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that nearly two-thirds of the nurses who participated in the study had adequate level while over one-third had inadequate levels of awareness regarding clients' rights. There was no statistically significant association between the level of awareness with the socio-demographic variables. It was clear that after becoming a registered nurse, the majority of nurses were not informed about clients' rights. It is recommended that continuing education programs for nurses concentrate on raising their understanding of clients' rights and emphasizing the significance of it to provide patients with quality care.

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