

Assessment of Knowledge on Care of Patient with Attempted Suicide among Nurses

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The assessment and management of patients who have attempted suicide present difficulties for nurses working in multispecialty hospitals because of routine job pressure and a lack of time for continuing education. Thus, in order to plan to raise the knowledge competency of nurses, it is critical to evaluate the current state of this field by gauging the nurses' degree of understanding on the care of patients who have attempted suicide. This study was aimed to assess the level of knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses at selected hospital, Chennai.

Material & Methods: This study was conducted by using the cross sectional, correlational research design among 50 nurses who were selected through purposive sampling technique in a selected hospital, Chennai, India. A structured questionnaire was employed to assess the nurses' knowledge regarding the management of patients who have attempted suicide. Data was gathered through self-administration.

Results: Most of the nurses were in category of needs improvement (90%) in knowledge and the mean, mean% and standard deviation for knowledge score of nurses were 3/10, 30% & 1.125 respectively.

Conclusion: The majority of nurses require further education in order to provide care for patients who have attempted suicide. Studies on the best ways to educate and train nurses working in multispecialty hospitals should be conducted in the future to ensure that patients who have attempted suicide receive high-quality nursing care.

Keywords: *Knowledge, Care, Nurses, Patient, Hospital, Attempted Suicide, Suicide attempted patient*

Introduction

Suicide is one of the major global public health concerns. Suicide was the fourth most common cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 29 in the World Health Organization's (WHO 2019) report. According to a Statista Research Department research from 2024, over 170,000 people in India died by suicide, with Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan having the highest rates of suicide deaths. Abuse, career issues, money loss, family issues, mental illnesses, feeling alone, and violence were listed as the causes of suicides. In Tamil Nadu (2022), there were 18925 suicide deaths in 2021. Five years ago, 56543 people between the ages of 18 and 29 passed away.

Care for them in addition to their psychological dimensions is crucial, since the number of suicide attempt cases rises year as a result of the aforementioned causes. Patients who have attempted suicide are mostly seen at non-psychiatric multispecialty hospitals for their physical care. Emergency, intensive care, and medical wards of multispecialty hospitals are likely to provide first aid and therapies to individuals who have attempted suicide.

In order to evaluate nurses' attitudes and knowledge regarding patients who had attempted suicide, Aldalaykeh et al. (2021) carried out a cross-sectional correlational study. Data were gathered via an online survey to evaluate the knowledge of 343 Jordanian nurses using the Literacy of Suicide Scale (LOSS). According to the findings, nurses' levels of suicide literacy were poor. This study also emphasised the significance of suicide education and training for nurses, as it may enhance their professional behaviours, attitudes, and self-assurance when caring for patients.

A systematic study was carried out by Boukouvalas et al. (2019) to investigate health care professionals' attitudes and knowledge regarding suicide, as well as their confidence in providing care for those who may be at risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviours. 46 primary research publications—including 27 cross-sectional and 19 interventional studies—were obtained following a thorough search of four electronic databases spanning ten years and 1,723 abstracts. This study found that there are complex relationships between the knowledge, attitudes, and confidence of primary healthcare practitioners, specialists, and health care students when it comes to caring for individuals who are at risk of suicide, and that these relationships may have an effect on patient outcomes. Therefore, as part of continuing professional development, suicide education and training must be included in health care curricula.

A survey among 136 nurses working in 4 emergency wards revealed the results that only 11% of them felt confident in their ability to deal with suicidal behaviour and most emergency nurses were insecure about their knowledge competence (Fry et al., 2019). Among the medical personnel, nursing staff members are who assist people who have attempted suicide the most. The quality of nursing care and patient safety will suffer as a result of nurses' ignorance about caring for patients who have attempted suicide. Therefore, it is imperative to evaluate nurses' knowledge competence on the care of patients who have attempted suicide in multispecialty hospitals.

Statement of the Problem

A descriptive study to assess the knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses at selected hospital, Chennai.

Objectives of the study

1. To assess the level of knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses at selected hospital, Chennai.
2. To determine the association between selected background variables and knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses.

Hypothesis

H₁ - There will be a significant association between selected background variables and knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses at $p < 0.05$.

Material & Methods

This study was conducted by using the cross sectional, correlational research design among 50 nurses who were selected through purposive sampling technique in a selected hospital, Chennai, India. Following the approval of the research committee, the content validity of the tool was confirmed by specialists and authorization to perform the study was acquired from the relevant authorities of a chosen multispecialty hospital in Chennai. The samples provided their informed consent. Confidentiality and privacy were preserved. Reliability of the questionnaire was established by test-retest approach ($r = 0.92$). Data was collected through Self-administration method by using predetermined and validated tools which consisted of following parts:

Part I – Background Variables Proforma of Nurses: This includes age, gender, education, total clinical experiences, area of work and previous experience of working with attempted suicide patient.

Part II - Structured Questionnaire on Knowledge of Nurses: Structured questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses. It consists of total 10 questions with 9 multiple choice questions with 4 options (1 right answer and 3 distracters) and 1 true or false question. Each right answer

will be scored 1 and wrong answer will be scored 0. Obtainable score is 0 to 10. The score was interpreted as follows:

Score	Interpretation
8 - 10	Adequate knowledge
5 - 7	Moderately Adequate
< 5	Needs improvement in knowledge

Collected data was analysed in SPSS 26, based on the objectives of the study.

Results

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Background Characteristics of Nurses

(N=50)

Background Characteristics	Categories	f	%
Age in Years	22-23	28	56
	24-25	22	44
Gender	Male	5	10
	Female	45	90
Educational status	GNM	5	10
	B.Sc. Nursing	45	90
Total years of clinical experiences	1-2yrs	45	90
	Above 2yrs	5	10
Area of work	Medical wards	17	34
	Surgical wards	14	28
	ICU / CCU/ MDCCU	14	28
	Emergency	5	10
Previous experience of working with attempted suicide patient	Yes	13	26
	No	37	74

Table 1 shows that most of the nurses (90%) were females, studied B.Sc. (N) and had 1-2 years of total clinical experiences. 56% of the nurses were aged between 22-23 years. Regarding their area of work, 34% of nurses were working in medical wards, 28% of them were from surgical and ICU wards and 10% of nurses were working in emergency wards. Only 26% of nurses had previous experience of working with attempted suicide patients.

Objective 1: To assess the level of knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Level of Knowledge of Nurses
(N=50)

Levels of Knowledge of Nurses (Score)	f	%
Adequate (8 – 10)	0	0
Moderately Adequate (5-7)	5	10
Needs Improvement (< 5)	45	90

Table 2 depicts that most of the nurses were in category of needs improvement (90%) and only 10% of them had moderately adequate level of knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide. None of them had adequate level of knowledge.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Knowledge on Care of Patient with Attempted Suicide among Nurses.
(N=50)

Component	Obtainable Score		Obtained Score		Mean	Mean %	SD
	Min	Max	Min	Max			
Knowledge score on care of patient with suicide attempt	0	10	1	6	3	30	1.125

Table 3 reveals that the nurses obtained score of knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide ranged between 1-6. The mean, mean% and standard deviation for knowledge score of nurses were 3/10, 30% & 1.125 respectively.

Objective 2: To determine the association between selected background variables and knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses.

Table 4: Association between Selected Background Variables and Knowledge on Care of Patient with Attempted Suicide among Nurses. (N=50)

Background Variables	Up to Mean Score	Above Mean Score	χ^2 value df.	P value
Age in Years				
22-23	23	5	3.25	0.071
24-25	12	10	1	NS
Gender				
Male	4	1	0.265*	0.61
Female	31	14	1	NS
Educational status				
GNM	4	1	0.265*	0.61
B.Sc.Nursing	31	14	1	NS
Total years of clinical experience				
1- 2years	33	12	1.06*	0.303
Above 2years	2	3	1	NS
Area of work				
Medical ward	10	7	3.113*	0.374
Surgical ward	12	2	3	NS
ICU / CCU/ MDCCU	9	5		
Emergency	4	1		
Previous experience of working with attempted suicide patient				
Yes	8	5	0.599	0.493
No	27	10	1	NS

Note: df. – degrees of freedom * -Yates corrected chi square value NS - Not Significant

The above table 4 shows that there was no significant association found between the knowledge of nurses and their selected background variables such as age, gender, education, total clinical experiences, area of work and previous experience of working with attempted suicide patient ($p>0.05$).

Discussion

The results of this survey showed that, nurses only knew 3/10 (mean knowledge score) and 30% (mean %) about caring for patients who had attempted suicide. Also the majority of nurses (90%) fell into the category of needing improvement. The findings of this study were supported by Shah et al. (2016) study on knowledge of 144 primary healthcare professionals about suicide, risk factors for suicide, asking about suicidal behaviour, and helping a suicidal patient was rated as low or medium. Nurses in multispecialty hospitals lack knowledge in this area could be due to various reasons like fading of memory what they learnt during their study period, not attending continuing education and training programmes on this topic, suicide attempted patients are not regularly admitted as like other

patients in routine. This indicates that creative training programmes are needed to strengthen the knowledge of these professionals in order to care for patients who have attempted suicide.

The nursing staff's knowledge was unaffected by any of their background characteristics in terms of the association between their knowledge and the background variables they chose ($p > 0.05$). Hence the hypothesis: H1– ‘There will be a significant association between selected background variables and knowledge on care of patient with attempted suicide among nurses at $p < 0.05$ ’ was rejected. This could be because there were less participants in the study. This result is inconsistent to results of a cross-sectional descriptive study among 778 nursing staff members by Huang et al.(2023) showed that knowledge of suicide prevention was correlated with factors such as age, department type, years of nursing experience, care experience and education.

Conclusion

The present study findings indicated that, nurses need to improve their knowledge to care for attempted suicide patients. To address these gaps, healthcare institutions should provide standardized training and continuous education with reinforcements on mental health first aid, suicide risk assessment, and therapeutic communication and management. This approach will enhance patient outcomes and empower nurses with the confidence and skills needed for effective, compassionate care.

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