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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A STUDY ON ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES REGARDING FIRST AID AMONG NURSING STUDENTS

*¹Swetha, C., ²Suchitra, M. N. and ³Sahana, B. N.

¹Department of Biochemistry, MVJ Medical College and Research Hospital, India

²Department of Physiology, MVJ Medical College and Research Hospital, India

³Department of Anatomy, MVJ Medical College and Research Hospital, India

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of first aid in BSc nursing students of a MVJ Nursing College, Bangalore.

Methodology: A rapid assessment of first aid knowledge was done on 100 female BSc nursing students aged between 17 to 19 years by using pretested structured questionnaire.

Results and Conclusion: Nursing students had inadequate knowledge regarding first aid at the beginning of their nursing career. Therefore initiatives should be taken to train them at an early stage.

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INTRODUCTION

Unpleasant though it may be, the fact remains that accident happens. If an accident happens in work place you cannot be a helpless witness, since simply standing by can potentially worsen the situation. This is why it is important to have at least a basic awareness of first aid. First aid is defined as the assessment and interventions that can be performed by a bystander immediately with minimal or no medical equipments (Kumar *et al.*, 2013). It is a common occurrence that whenever an accident occurs or any person gets injured, people around the casualty usually panic more than the casualty himself. This should not be the case. The first aider should have a positive attitude and be prepared to help the casualty. The first aider should also have the adequate knowledge and skills about what he is doing, and be encouraging and reassuring to the victims (Deepak and Nayak, 2012). Many experts believe that even a limited understanding of first aid would be an invaluable service to individuals who find themselves in emergency situations (Semwal *et al.*, 2013).

Almost everyone should have little bit knowledge and skill about basic first aid in emergency of bleeding, shock, sprain, snake bite, dog bite, etc. The significance of training healthcare professionals in first aid at a very early stage in their career is now acknowledged worldwide. At some point in the nursing curriculum, students are taught how to handle emergencies in a hospital emergency setting where drugs and other necessities are available. But the adequate knowledge required for handling an emergency without hospital setting at the site of accident or emergency may not be sufficient (Khan *et al.*, 2010). The main objective of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of first aid in BSc nursing students of MVJ Nursing College, Bangalore. Another important feature of this study was to find if nursing students were trained enough at providing first aid being in a health care setup. This study also aims to gauge the need for further training in first aid for nursing students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A rapid assessment of first aid knowledge was done on 100 female BSc nursing students (Who had just entered BSc Nursing and with no prior training of first aid) aged between 17 to 19 years by using pretested structured questionnaire.

*Corresponding author: Swetha, C.

Department of Biochemistry, MVJ Medical College and Research Hospital, India.

After briefing about the study objectives, the nursing students were asked to tick the most appropriate answer in the given list of options. Questionnaire was collected back, the data was entered into the computer using Microsoft excel 07 version. All the correct responses were given one point and wrong responses were given zero point and percentage of students who gave correct responses for each question was calculated.

RESULTS

Out of 100 nursing students 96% were aware that first aid was the first help given to a victim of accident. 48% knew that up to 5 back blows were to be given in case of choke on some food. 86% were aware that in case of suspected heart attack the victim should be first made to sit in a comfortable position. Only 16% knew that in case of severe bleeding due to cut injury in arm direct pressure should be applied on the wound whereas many answered that the arm should be kept in cold water. 62% knew that airway should be checked first in a victim lying on ground and not responding.

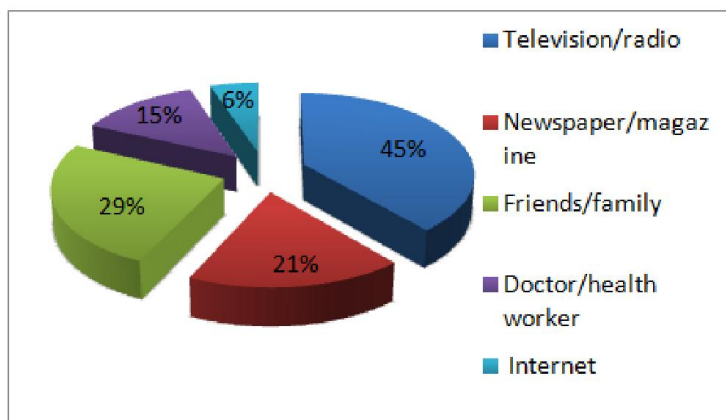
Only 20% were aware that a bee sting should be scraped while the others answered that it should be pulled or washed with water. 30% knew that the first thing to be done for a victim of seizures was to keep him safe from injury, majority answered that a key or iron should be placed in their hands which reflects on the incorrect practices and myths associated with first aid. 74% knew that the first information to be gathered in a person who has swallowed poison was, what they have taken, when and how much. 74% knew that in case of asthma attack the person should be made to sit in comfortable position and asked to take his medication. 71% were aware that TT injection should be taken within 24 hours of attaining cut injury with a rusted knife. Only 6% of the students were aware that in case of bleeding nose in a child they should pinch the nose and ask the child to lean forwards whereas 80% answered that the child should lean back which was incorrect. 55% were aware that in case of broken leg a soft padding should be placed around the limb. 45% answered correctly that a dog bite wound should be first thoroughly washed with running water, while many answered that turmeric or a tight cloth should be applied.

Table 1. Percentage of correct responses given to the questionnaire on first aid

S. No	Questions asked	% of students who gave correct answers
1	What do you mean by first aid?	96%
2	You are having lunch with a friend and he begins to choke on some food. He can't speak, breath or cough it up, how can you help him?	48%
3	Your colleague is complaining of breathlessness and a tight pain in the chest, you suspect a heart attack, what should you do?	86%
4	One of your friends has cut in his arm and is bleeding severely. How do you treat this injury?	16%
5	You are walking home and you see a man lying on the ground, you ask him if he is alright but he doesn't respond. What should you do next?	62%
6	What to do for a patient with bee sting?	20%
7	How can you help someone who is having a seizure (fits)?	30%
8	What information you will gather if you think a person has swallowed poison/ harmful substance?	74%
9	What should you do to help someone who is having an asthma attack?	74%
10	If a person has had a cut injury with a rusted knife, TT injection should be given within?	71%
11	A child comes to you with bleeding nose, what is the first aid measure given?	06%
12	Your friend has a broken bone in the leg, what do you do?	55%
13	In case of dog bite, what is the first step you will take?	45%
14	First aid given to a victim of snake bite?	05%
15	How do you care for someone who has fainted?	12%

Table 2. Percentage of source of information regarding first aid

1	Television/radio	45%
2	Newspaper/magazine	21%
3	Friends/family	29%
4	Doctor/health worker	15%
5	Internet	06%



Only 5% knew that in case of snake bite the victim should be made to lie down calm till medical help is available, majority answered that the venom should be sucked out or tourniquet should be tied, which are incorrect methods. 12% were aware that a fainted person should be positioned on his back, but many answered incorrectly that water should be poured on his/her face which is wrong.

DISCUSSION

In the present study it was observed that 96% of nursing students were aware of the meaning of first aid. This is quite satisfactory response but when an enquiry was made in depth regarding the actual knowledge and practices they were found to be largely inadequate. This indicates that though nursing students are introduced to first aid training at some point or the other in their nursing career, emphasis should be made to train them at the very beginning of their nursing career. A study done by Bildik *et al.*, in 2011 stated that first aid knowledge at a faculty of education was considered to be insufficient (Bildik *et al.*, 2011).

A study done by Sembal *et al.* which included rapid assessment of first aid knowledge in 156 people of rural field practice area in Department of Community Medicine, HIHT University, Dehradun showed that only 25.6% persons were familiar with the term first aid and people also lacked knowledge and awareness about first aid skills (Semwal *et al.*, 2013). Metin *et al.* conducted a study in a total of 134 university students to find out their knowledge about first aid which determined that 65.7% students didn't get first aid knowledge before and most (98.5%) of the students feel it is necessary to have first aid education (Metin and Mutlu, 2010). In a study of 573 school nurses, Olympia *et al.* reported that 68% had managed life threatening incidence requiring emergency medical attention during the previous school years (Olympia *et al.*, 2005). A study done by Abbas *et al.* on 125 trained and 125 untrained medical students, it was found that the knowledge of trained students was found to be better than those of untrained yet the mean of trained students was less than 50% which is not satisfactory (Abbas *et al.*, 2011). A study conducted in UAE on the efficacy of first aid training programme for the first year medical students showed that the programme provides students with sound first aid knowledge and practical basic life saving skills (Das and Elzubeir, 2001).

Conclusion

This study brings out important information about lack of awareness regarding first aid among nursing students implying the need for designing future programmes to train nursing students in the beginning of their nursing career.

There is a need for health personnel to take active part in educating themselves and others regarding first aid. First aid training should be a component of educational programmes and every individual should be updated at regular intervals throughout their career.

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