



RESEARCH PAPER

An Empirical Investigation of Nurses' Knowledge regarding the Management of Psychiatric Patients in Emergency Unit of a Tertiary Care Hospital, Lahore, Pakistan

¹Sidra Shumshir Ali, ²Rubina Mustafa and ³Shazia Rafique

1. Head Nurse, Sir Gangaram Hospital, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Nursing Officer, Jinnah Hospital, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Charge Nurse, Punjab Institute of Mental Health, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author: sidraasif77@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Emergency Department is a fast-paced setting where nurses must deal with crucial situations such as psychologically disturbed patients. Therefore, this study has been conducted to investigate the knowledge of nurses to manage psychiatric patients in the emergency unit of a tertiary care hospital in Lahore, Pakistan. A descriptive-analytic design was conducted from January 21, 2023, to March 15 2023 at an emergency unit in Jinnah Hospital, Lahore. The study instrument was designed to meet the objectives of the current study, which consists of two parts: the first part includes the demographical data for nurses; the second part includes the knowledge management Scale 32 items (KMS). The study shows nurses have a good level of knowledge of items related to knowledge about the treatment of psychiatric disorders at the emergency unit as seen among 89.4%. The study concluded that most nurses have a good level of knowledge ' about the treatment of psychiatric disorders at emergency units. Training and counselling sessions of nurses should be conducted to manage the psychiatric patients effectively.

KEYWORDS Emergency Unit, Nurses' Knowledge, Psychiatric Patients, Tertiary Care Hospital

Introduction

The emergency department is the first place people with emergencies go for help, and its main functions are resuscitation, limb salvage, and symptom relief in an emergency and complex situation, emergency department nurses provide a wide spectrum of nursing care to patients of all ages (Chou & Tseng, 2020). The Emergency Department [ED] is a fast-paced setting where nurses must deal with crucial situations such as psychologically disturbed patients (Ebrahimi et al., 2016).

Nurses in emergency rooms are frequently presented with patients who exhibit physical symptoms associated with psychiatric disorders, which might impair nurses' ability to make an accurate diagnosis and manage their patients (McCaffery et al., 2005).

Psychosocial and mental health care is regarded as a critical component of all health-care providers' responsibilities, since it contributes to patient satisfaction and care quality (International Council of Nursing [ICN], 2013). According to previous studies, psychiatric disorders are present in 84 percent of patients who visit emergency rooms often (Clever, 2014). They feature abrupt changes in emotions or behavior that, if left unchecked, might cause substantial physical, mental, or social harm if not addressed (Jayabharathi et al., 2019).

Literature Review

A psychological emergency is a disruption in cognition, mood, or behavior that produces immediate distress or incapacity in the individual or others, necessitating intervention (Sreevani, 2016).

Psychiatric emergencies are symptoms that arise in one or more areas of emotion, thinking, or behavior, affecting people's bodily, mental, social, and functional integrity, as well as their quality of life, to the point that they can no longer accept it (Kocaman, 2007).

Psychiatric symptoms can also occur as a result of medical disorders, poisoning, substance addiction, drug side effects, and drug-drug combinations (Şahingöz et al., 2014).

Many chronic mental illnesses, psychological stress disorders, and life events might result in an emergency psychiatric situation (Büyükbayram et al., 2018).

Material and Methods

A descriptive analytic design was conducted to measure the Nurses' Knowledge and Skills regarding the management of psychiatric disorders at the emergency unit in Jinnah Hospital, Lahore for the period from January 21, 2023, to March 15, 2023. The study instrument was designed to meet the objectives of the current study, which consists of two parts: the first part includes the cover letter, and demographical data for nurses; the second part includes the knowledge management Scale (KMS) (AlShibi & Hamdan-Mansour, 2020) that include two parts; Part one consisted of 15 items (item 1-15) measuring nurses' knowledge in Nurses' Knowledge regarding Management of Psychiatric disorders at Emergency Units (MPSD); Part two, items (16 -32) was designated to measure knowledge regarding the physical and Psychiatric Signs and Symptoms of Psychiatric Disorders (SSPSD).

This study was conducted in the Tertiary Care Hospital in the province of Punjab, which is the hospital that is considered in the center of the governorate, and most patients visit them for treatment. A non-probability, purposive sample of (268) nurses working in the emergency unit in the Jinnah Hospital, Lahore. The sample was subjected to a structure of interview self-reporting between the researcher and the nurses. 256 nurses participated in filling out the forms from 268 nurses, where 2 forms were neglected due to their incompleteness, and 10 nurses did not want to fill out the forms.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Background Characteristics of the Respondents

Background Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age M±SD= 27.89±6.291	<20 years	1
	20-29 years	179
	30-39 years	41
	40-49 years	11
	50 ≤ year	11
Gender	Male	110
	Female	126
Nursing Qualification	Diploma	62
	BS Nursing	114
	MS Nursing	60
Experience in Psychiatric Nursing	Yes	147
	No	89
Any Psychiatric Training Course	Yes	27
	No	209
Years of Experience in Nursing M±SD= 6.52±6.304	<1 years	24
	1-5 years	113
	6-10 years	58
	11-15 years	23
	16-20 years	8

Years of Experience in Emergency Units M±SD= 3.22±4.225	21≤ year	10	4.2
	<1 years	57	24.2
	1-5 years	139	58.9
	6-10 years	24	10.2
	11-15 years	5	2.1
	16-20 years	7	3
	21≤ year	4	1.7

The above table 1 reveals that the age of most of the respondents (75.8%) was between 20-29 years, and most of the nurses were female (53.4%). Regarding qualifications, the majority of the respondents (48.3%) had a degree of BS in Nursing, and most of the nurses (62.3%) had experience in psychiatric nursing. Most of the respondents (88.6%) also stated that they had not taken any psychiatric training courses. Regarding experience in nursing, the majority of respondents had 6-10 years and 58.9% of the respondents had served in the emergency unit.

Table 2
Overall Status of Knowledge among Nurses to Manage the Psychiatric Patients in Emergency Unit

Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage	M	SD
Poor	0	0.0	52.69	6.948
Fair	25	10.6		
Good	211	89.4		

The above table 2 states that 89.4% of the nurses working in the emergency unit of Jinnah Hospital, Lahore had a good level of knowledge and 10.6% of the nurses had fair knowledge about the management of psychiatric patients.

Discussion

The descriptive analysis of sociodemographic variables showed that nurses are young at the age of 20-29 years. This result is closed to the result of Morphet et al., (2012) who reported that almost of the sample of their study was with age (18-30) years. Regarding the gender of nurses, it showed that more than half of them are females working in emergency units. The large number of nurses staff was almost female, as well as registration in nursing middle schools was for females only, and the rate of acceptance in the study of institutes and colleges for females is lower than for males. A study revealed by Holmberg et al., (2020) that almost all of sample was female where she was (64%) and male (35%). In addition, the authors Jayabharathi et al., (2019) refer to the sample as female (88%) and the male was (12%). Also Melo et al., (2016) agree with this result Women's domination appears as an essential trait highlighted in nursing practice that reflects the profession's history. Females continue to be the majority gender in the nursing profession, according to gender ratios (Phukubye et al., 2021).

The nursing qualification for nurses who are working in emergency units refers to a high percentage seen with a diploma in nursing, approximately quadrant of them have with bachelor's degree, and the remaining are graduated from middle or secondary school. This result is close to the study of Jayabharathi et al., (2019) which found (55%) of nurses in the study had a diploma in nursing. The finding regarding experience in psychiatric nursing states that 62.3% of nurses have experience in psychiatric nursing. The study revealed they participated in psychiatric training courses in addition some of the nurses graduated with a Bachelor's degree in nursing.

It is known that nurses' knowledge analysis shows a good level of knowledge regarding the management of psychiatric patients in the emergency room. This finding could be explained due to the learning that they obtained during their studies in colleges,

institutes, and middle schools, as well as because they participated in courses on mental health, as well as due to the presence of nurses with a bachelor's degree in nursing. A study of Al-Shaibi and Hamdan Mansour (2020) reported that the results were, 25% of the nurses had a rating of 95 or less, 25% had a score of 127 or more, and 50% had a score between 95 and 127 which indicated a high score in knowledge, their findings showed that majority of nurses have a good degree of expertise to manage patients with psychological disorder in EDs. Additional support was found by Jelinek et al., (2013), and Sivakumar et al., (2011) who reported that nurses have a good level of knowledge about the psychiatric disorder.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the nurses have a good level of knowledge about the management of psychiatric disorders that is supposed to enable them to manage psychiatric disorders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are forwarded:

- Efficient working hours duty should be introduced in tertiary care hospitals
- Before posting at the emergency unit, training courses should be offered to the nurses
- Counseling sessions should be conducted with the psychiatric patients
- Assessment and evaluation of knowledge among nurses should be part of their key performance indicators

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