

Awareness among Intern Doctors about Medical Records and Duty of Doctors in Tertiary Care Hospital, Valsad

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Abstract

Background: Optimum knowledge of medical records and duty of doctor is must for every doctor to enhance safe health care delivery in an unbiased standardized way. Present study was undertaken with aim to assess awareness of intern doctors towards medical records and duty of doctors.

Materials and methods: Present study was undertaken at Gujarat Medical Education and Research Society (GMERS) Medical College, Valsad, Gujarat after obtaining ethical approval from the Institutional Ethical Committee of Valsad. Total 10 questions were prepared and validated on Likert scale (1 to 5, 1 – Strongly Disagree, 5 – Strongly Agree) regarding medical records and duty of doctors. Total 100 intern doctors of GMERS Medical College, Valsad, Gujarat were subjected to pre-tested and pre-validated Likert scale type questionnaire regarding medical records and duty of doctors after obtaining their informed written consent. Data obtained were analyzed via median score and tabulated.

Results: Students were well aware about following facts like Maintenance of patients' record is legal duty of hospital, Every operation required informed written consent of patient, Fail to attend patient during emergency is punishable, Patient has right to refuse treatment, and Carelessly leaving object into patient body during operation is negligent act. Students were not sure of facts like Patients' records are property of patients, Refusing patient on religious ground is punishable, Not to treat patient due to HIV is punishable, and doctor has right to choose patient. Students were not aware regarding either doctor can refuse to attend medico-legal case or not.

Conclusion: Intern doctors had no awareness regarding duration of preservation of hospital records. Students were not sure of various aspects of medical records and duty of doctors. Compulsory internship in Forensic Medicine subject as well as sensitization workshop regarding medical records and duty of doctors for interns at beginning of their internship may build confidence among them to be aware with various duties of doctors.

Key words: Medical records, Duty of doctors, Awareness, Intern Doctors, Valsad.

Introduction

Legal aspects of medical practice were present in early civilizations such as Babylon and India [1]. Optimum knowledge of medical law, medical records, duty of doctor towards patient is must for every doctor to enhance safe health care delivery in an unbiased

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standardized way [2]. Forensic Medicine subject is usually dealing with teaching of medical law and ethics in Indian medical education set up. Present study was undertaken with aim to assess awareness of intern doctors towards medical records and duty of doctors.

Materials and Method

Present study was undertaken at Gujarat Medical Education and Research Society (GMERS) Medical College, Valsad, Gujarat after obtaining ethical approval from the Institutional Ethical Committee of Valsad. Questionnaire was designed to study perceptions of intern doctors regarding Medical records and duty of doctors. Total 10 questions were prepared on Likert scale (1 to 5, 1 – Strongly Disagree, 5 – Strongly Agree) and validated for face and content validity.

Inclusion criteria: Intern doctors who were willing to participate were included in the study after obtaining their informed written consent with full confidentiality.

Exclusion criteria: Those who didn't want to participate were excluded.

Total 100 intern doctors of GMERS Medical College, Valsad, Gujarat were subjected to pre-tested and pre-validated Likert scale type questionnaire [3-15] regarding medical records and duty of doctors after obtaining their informed written consent. Data obtained were analyzed via median score and tabulated.

Results

Total 100 intern doctors were participated in the present study and their responses to questionnaire related to medical records and duty of doctors were taken into consideration for data analysis. Out of 100 respondents, 58 were male and 42 were female. There was no statistical difference among perceptions of male and female.

Students were well aware about following facts like Maintenance of patients' record is legal duty of hospital, Every operation required informed written consent of patient, Fail to attend patient during emergency is punishable, Patient has right to refuse treatment, and doctor has right to choose patient on certain ground.

Students were not sure of facts like Patients' records are property of patients, Refusing patient on religious ground is punishable, Not to treat patient due to HIV is punishable, and either doctor can refuse to attend

medico-legal cases or not.

Students were not aware of duration of preservation of hospital records.

Table – 1: Awareness regarding Medical law and negligence among intern doctors (Likert scale: 1 to 5, 1 – Strongly Disagree, 5 – Strongly Agree).

Sr. No.	Perceptions of students	Median score
1	Maintenance of patients' record is legal duty of hospital	5
2	Patients' records are property of patients	3
3	I am aware of duration of preservation of hospital records	2
4	Every operation required informed written consent of patient.	4
5	Fail to attend patient during emergency is punishable	4
6	Refusing patient on religious ground is punishable	3
7	Not to treat patient due to HIV is punishable	3
8	Patient has right to refuse treatment	4
9	Doctor has right to choose patient	4
10	Doctor can refuse to attend medico-legal cases	3

Discussion

Students usually not do direct dealing with medico-legal cases during their undergraduate study period but acquire only theoretical and exam oriented knowledge about it in subject of Forensic Medicine. Many students understood basic principles of medical records and duty of doctors which is in accordance with the study done by Dash S.K. in 2010 [16]. During internship, various exposure of medico-legal cases, medical law and negligence is started and gradually students acquired reasonable practical exposure before actual practicing in society.

Written records of patients, including history, radiographs, investigations and photographs must be particular, and it is compulsory for the documents to

be signed by appropriate authority and dated properly. Legally, physician written records carry more weight than patient's recollections [17]. Under Article 51 A(h) of the Constitution of India, there is an ethical duty on the doctor, and a legal duty, to maintain and preserve medical, medico-legal, and legal documents in the finest benefits of social and professional justice [18].

General awareness regarding informed written consent was present among intern doctors with its requirements, needs and applicability. The authority of doctor is barely ever challenged, and advice of doctor is thought in great honor hence role of doctor in decision making is still more but nowadays patient's standard is becoming popular [19]. Heywood R. in 2007 found that 98% of medical students found informed consent to be significant and essential for a surgical intervention [20].

Doctor should not refuse treatment on religious ground neither denied treatment to HIV positive patients. Fail to attend patient in emergency is punishable for doctor as well as patient has right to refuse treatment. Negligence in medical practice in simpler term is doing something which a reasonably competent doctor is not supposed to do or not doing something which a reasonable competent doctor is supposed to do. Doctor has right to choose patient but doctor should not avoid treating patient when it comes as medico-legal case. Doctor is bound to give first aid and basic life-saving treatment to every patient particularly in emergency without any bias or prejudice.

Conclusion

Intern doctors had no awareness regarding duration of preservation of hospital records. Students were not sure of various aspects of medical records and duty of doctors. Compulsory internship in Forensic Medicine subject as well as sensitization workshop regarding medical records and duty of doctors for interns at beginning of their internship may build confidence among them to be aware with various cases.

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