

Assessment of Medico- Legal Awareness of Practicing Obstetricians and Gynecologists

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Abstract

Background: In the care of suffering the medical professionals need scientific knowledge, technical skill, moral understanding of profession and awareness about the relevant laws of the land. The present study was conducted to assess medico- legal awareness of practicing obstetricians and gynecologists.

Materials & Method: The present study was conducted on 156 gynecologist. All were provided with standard questionnaire consisting of ten questions was given to them and their response was collected.

Results: Age group 30-45 years had 30, 35-40 years had 45, 40-45 years had 50 and >45 years had 31 subjects. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). Questionnaire used was promptness in examination of victim of sexual assault, procedure related to Death Certification in MLCs, evidence Preservation in rape cases, awareness of Laws related to Obst.& Gynac Practice, real Causes of the Negligence Complaints, Awareness Regarding the provisions of PCPNDT Act and awareness about need of examining genuine MLCs. Most of the subjects was aware. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Most of the gynecologist had sufficient awareness regarding medico- legal issues.

Key words: Gynecology, Medicolegal, victims.

Introduction

No greater opportunity, no greater responsibility, no greater obligation can fall to any other human being than to become a medical professional. In the care of suffering the medical professionals need scientific knowledge, technical skill, moral understanding of profession and awareness about the relevant laws of the land. Primarily doctors but also on other ancillary and administrative staff of the hospital have several ethical and legal obligations in the performance of their duties.¹

It is important therefore, that every concerned person of the hospital, related with treatment and care of the patients must understand the nature of obligations and

thus fulfills these obligations to the best of their ability, to maintain nobility of medical profession.²

The obstetricians and gynecologists are one of the important specialties of medical faculty. Increase in life expectancy, decreasing number of female births and reduction in family size cast a significant quantum of accountability on these “doctors.”³ They are working day and night for the benefit of patients. They are also very helpful with the Mother and ‘Child Health Programme, Family Planning Mission, etc. of Government of India. The obstetricians and gynecologists are also helpful to society at large for their work for crime against woman, in the form of examination of victim of sexual abuse, the PC & PNDT act, Maternal Mortality.⁴ The present study was conducted to assess medico- legal awareness of practicing obstetricians and gynecologists.

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Materials & Method

The present study was conducted in the department of Forensic Medicine and Department of Gynaecology.

It consisted of 156 gynecologist. All subjects were informed about the study and written consent was taken. Ethical clearance was obtained prior to the study.

Data such as name, age, sex etc was recorded in performa. All were provided with standard questionnaire consisting of ten questions was given to them and

their response was collected. The questions in the questionnaire were mainly in relation to promptness, procedural awareness, awareness of laws, insight about causes of negligence & their experience with agencies of crime investigation & administration of justice. Results thus obtained were studied. P value <0.05 was considered significant.

Results

Table I Age wise distribution

Age group (Years)	Number	P value
30-35	30	0.01
35-40	45	
40-45	50	
>45	31	

Table I shows that age group 30-45 years had 30, 35-40 years had 45, 40-45 years had 50 and >45 years had 31 subjects. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Table II Assessment of awareness

Questions	Aware	Partly aware	Not aware	P value
Promptness in examination of victim of sexual assault	80	36	40	0.05
Procedure related to Death Certification in MLCs	72	40	44	0.02
Evidence Preservation in rape cases	57	60	39	0.01
Awareness of Laws related to Obst.& Gynac Practice	70	50	36	
Real Causes of the Negligence Complaints	60	46	50	0.24
Awareness Regarding the provisions of PCPNDT Act	56	58	42	0.76
Awareness about need of examining genuine MLCs	65	55	36	0.05

Table II shows that questionnaire used was promptness in examination of victim of sexual assault, procedure related to Death Certification in MLCs, evidence Preservation in rape cases, awareness of Laws related to Obst.& Gynac Practice, real Causes of the Negligence Complaints, Awareness Regarding the provisions of PCPNDT Act and awareness about need of examining genuine MLCs. Most of the subjects was aware. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Discussion

There is increased use of internet, electronic and print media there is an increase in awareness among public on the subject of ethical conduct of medical practitioners. Hence there are more cases against doctors, which is an issue of immediate concern to the medical fraternity. To keep away from this, doctors need to make acquainted themselves with laws and regulations that concern their

practice.⁵

It is a known fact that adverse outcomes to the patients in the course of healthcare management are frequent day by day and this is not without the danger of professional risk to this group of practitioners.⁶ These risks range, from failure to attend patient, examination and diagnosis at one end to specific investigative procedures and complicated operations and other. Same is the story in relation to the medicolegal management of cases of violence against woman. It is interesting to note that the social, medical and legal requirements in both these situations are qualitatively almost similar.⁷ The medical science is advancing and law is encroaching in almost every area of medical practice. It also cannot be ignored that society deserves the right to nourish great expectations from the advances in modern medicine and legal provisions aimed at their welfare.⁸ The present study was conducted to assess medico-legal awareness of practicing obstetricians and gynecologists.

In this study, age group 30-45 years had 30, 35-40 years had 45, 40-45 years had 50 and >45 years had 31 subjects. Kachare et al⁹ conducted a study to assess medico legal knowledge and awareness in interns and post graduate students. Total 200 students were included in our study. We found that 84 (70%) interns and 32 (40%) post graduate students had no proper knowledge in handling medico legal cases independently. 55 (45.83%) interns and 63 (78.75%) post graduate students were of opinion that the present UG teaching is not sufficient for them to tackle medico legal cases. Only 36 (30%) interns and 33 (41.25%) post graduate students were aware about the preservatives that are generally used for chemicals analysis of organs and 25 (20.83%) interns and 65 (81.25%) post graduate students were aware of Consumer Protection Act.

In present study, questionnaire used was promptness in examination of victim of sexual assault, procedure related to Death Certification in MLCs, evidence Preservation in rape cases, awareness of Laws related to Obst.& Gynac Practice, real Causes of the Negligence Complaints, Awareness Regarding the provisions of PCPNDT Act and awareness about need of examining genuine MLCs. Most of the subjects was aware.

Giri et al¹⁰ found that awareness status regarding different medico-legal case management like medico-legal cases, Promptness in examination of victim of sexual assaults, Death certification in MLC, Evidence

Preservation in MLC, Medico-legal severity of injury, Importance of Identity in MLC, Criminal Abortion Cases, Awareness of Law related to medical Practice, Real causes of Negligence complaints, Awareness regarding the provisions of PCPNDT Act, Importance of good medical record and Rights of the patients etc. 33.69% were aware, 31.02% were partly aware and 24.93% were not aware and 10.36% has given no response in related subject matter or issues.

Conclusion

Most of the gynecologist had sufficient awareness regarding medico-legal issues.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Ethical Clearance: Ethical clearance has been taken from Institutional Ethical Committee

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