

Awareness and Attitude about Nurse Led Clinic (NLC) among Health Care Professionals

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Abstract

Background: Nursing binds human society with a bond of care and affection. Nursing is a calling to care, which offers an oasis of poignant stories and pool of challenges. The scope of nursing practice has expanded and extended to different settings other than hospital only. Nurses deal with the most precious thing in this wide world the human life. The present study was undertaken with an aim to determine the awareness and attitude towards Nurse Led Clinic (NLC) among health care professionals.

Material and Methods: A descriptive study, was carried out among 105 health care professional (30 Nurses, 30 Physicians, 30 Dentist and 15 Physiotherapist of Pravara Rural Hospital Loni Bk to assess awareness and attitude about Nurse led clinic. The participants was selected by simple random sampling technique, and self prepared and content validated structured questionnaire (for awareness) and rating scale (for attitude) was used for data collection. The descriptive statistics (mean, SD) and inferential statistics (chi square test) was applied wherever required.

Results: The overall knowledge score for nurse was (7.56±2.06), for physician (8.76±2.96), for dentist (9.0±2.92) and for physiotherapist the score was (7.52±2.97) which is >50% indicating average level of knowledge on NLC. In line with, overall attitude score for nurse was (85.8±5.0) for physician (76.3±11.6), for dentist (79.1±10.7) and for physiotherapist the score was (72.8±7.56) which is >73% indicating average to good attitude on NLC. It was noted that the demographic variables like age, gender, previous knowledge, work experience had significant association with knowledge and attitude on NLC at 0.05 level.

Conclusion: The study findings showed that health care professionals had average knowledge and good attitude regarding the nurse led clinic. The health care professional's demographic variables had significantly associated with the study variables. There was a weak correlation was observed between the study variables.

Keywords: Awareness, attitude, nurse led clinic, health care professionals

Introduction

Health care system is an integrated and collaborative profession where health personnel of different line of system are working together to get the aim of betterment of patients health and improved system of patient care. Physicians, surgeons, nurse's, physiotherapist, housekeeping persons and lot of

various cadres are involved in health care. With the advancement of medical sciences, role of nurses also expanded as clinician, researcher and advanced nurse practitioner. This expansion has played a vital role in bridging the gap between medicine and nursing. Furthermore, this bridging has revealed the emergence of Nurse Led clinics.¹

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Today's nurses are empowered with competency and knowledge, and acts as backbone of the hospital. To overcome the shortage of doctors in developing countries, there is need to focus on utilization of nursing services and knowledge in the area where they are enriched with core competencies needed for patient care. Nurse led clinics appears to be an innovative ideas where the health need of patients care can be fulfilled in timely and cost effective manner. There is a need to broaden the scope of nursing curriculum by adding more concepts like competency based modules and critical thinking among nurses.²

Health care delivery evolves across the world and struggles to cope with changes in medical care, and with the rising number of people living longer with long term conditions, it is frequently suggested that more care should be delivered and coordinated by nurses who have the most daytoday contact with affected individuals and their families.³The Indian Nursing Council has developed curriculum for the most important way to reduce maternal death in India would be to ensure that a skilled health professional is present at every birth. Skilled care during childbirth is vital because millions of women and newborns develop serious complications during or immediately after delivery. Health professionals like doctors, nurses who have midwifery skills can recognize these complications and treat them or refer to higher health centers immediately if more skilled care is needed.⁴

In recent years there has been an evolution in the nurse led clinics within hospital outpatient departments, and health centers. The government endorsed the use of such clinics as a way for the public to access specialist health care and treatment quickly and also as an effective way to manage chronic illness. However, currently there is a lack of uniform structure in educational preparation and practical guidance for nurses interested in taking up nurse led practice.⁵

As there is a shortage of health care specialists, ministry of health is planning to introduce Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in selected disciplines such as oncology, neurology, critical care, cardiovascular care, and anesthesia. The nurse led clinics are not a common practice in India. However, it has been functioning in the US since 1960s, UK since 1980s and Netherlands since 2012. Nurse led clinics are mainly run by nurses independently or supported by a multidisciplinary team with advanced skills and knowledge and can work autonomously. In these clinics, nurses make detailed physiological assessment, planning, delivery

of treatment, monitoring of patient condition, management of medication, patient education and referral to higher centers when indicated.^{6,7,8}

Through the nurse midwives is legally permitted to conduct delivery there is hardly few nurse led births clinics were established. There may be numerous factors involve most important the perception of public on outcome on nurse led care, in India the concept of nurse led clinic is at early stage wherein the nurse midwives is competent and skillful in nature.⁹ The awareness on nurse practitioner and nurse led clinics are mere among the people including the health care professionals. Thus the present study was undertaken to assess the awareness and attitude on nurse led clinics among the health care professionals.

Material and Methods

Anon experimental research, descriptive study design with cross sectional approach was carried out among the 105 health care professional (Nurses 30, Physician 30, Dentist 30, and Physiotherapist 15) employed at Pravara Rural Hospital, Loni Bk, Maharashtra. The health care professionals those who are available during data collection period and willing to participate were included in the study. The structured performa was used for data collection, and it consists of socio demographic data (08 items), structured questionnaire (assessment of knowledge on NLC (20 items), and rating scale (assessment of attitude on NLC (20 items). Based on obtained scores the knowledge and attitude was categorized as poor, average and good respectively. The content validity of tool was established with number of experts, and the split half method was used to assess the reliability of tool, and the calculated r value (0.82) highlights that the tool was found to be reliable.

The study was approved by Institutional Ethics Committee and Institutional Research Committee (IEC/IRC) of Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences (DU) and the Administrative Permission was sought from the concerned authorities. The written informed consent was taken from all health care professionals before the enrollment in the study. The data collection was done by employing questionnaire method, wherein the collected data was organized, tabulated and analyzed by using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistics techniques wherever required, $p < 0.05$ level was considered as the level of significance; and the analyzed data was presented in the form of tables, figures and diagrams.

Results

Socio demographic profile of health care professionals: Majority (67%) of nurses were 20 – 30 years of age, and nearly two third (60%) of them were female. Significantly (43%) had less than 05 years of work experience, wherein majority (77%) acquired information through peers and friends. In line with physicians, nearly one third (30%) were 25 – 30 years of age, majority (77%) of them was male, significant percent (40%) had work experience less than 05 years and majority (77%) had information through journals.

Majority (57%) of dentist were 25 – 30 years of age, (60%) of them were male, (77%) had work experience less than 05 years, and (17%) had more than 15 years. Most (90%) of them had information about NLC through journals; whereas more than half (53%) of physiotherapist were 31 – 40 years of age, majority (67%) of them were female, and (60%) had work experience less than 05 years and interestingly all (100%) the physiotherapist did not had any information related to NLC.

Awareness and attitude of health care professionals about Nurse Led Clinic: Distribution of mean, SD and mean percentage of health care professionals on awareness regarding nurse led clinic shows that overall mean awareness score for nurses was (7.56±2.06), for physician (8.76±2.96), for dentist (9.0±2.92) and for physiotherapist the score was (7.52±2.97) which is >50% of total score indicates average level of knowledge on NLC. The section wise mean score was depicted in the below mentioned Table No.1. The health care professionals had mean score more than 73 indicating that average to good attitude towards nurse led clinics.

Association between awareness's, attitude and demographic variables: It was noted that the nurse's age, gender, previous work experience; physician's age, gender, years of experience; dentist age, gender; physiotherapist age, years of experience had significant association with knowledge and attitude on nurse led clinics at $p < 0.05$ level (Table No.2). Alongside, there was a weak positive correlation ($r = 0.37$) was observed between the study variables i.e. knowledge and attitude.

Table No 1: Awareness and attitude of health care professionals about Nurse Led Clinic

Knowledge	Max. score	Nurse		Physician		Dentist		Physiotherapist	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Introduction	05	2.06	0.43	2.93	1.31	2.73	1.04	2.39	0.98
Legal aspects	05	2.89	1.15	2.83	0.91	3.13	0.97	2.06	1.03
Practical aspects	05	2.59	0.48	3.00	0.74	3.16	0.91	3.06	0.96
Overall	15	7.56	2.06	8.76	2.96	9.02	2.92	7.52	2.97
Attitude	100	85.8	4.59	76.3	11.6	79.1	10.7	72.8	7.56

Table No. 2: Association between awareness's, attitude and demographic variables

S. N.	Category	Variables	Knowledge (x2 value)	Attitude (x2 value)
1	Nurse	Age	4.33*	4.22*
		Gender	5.19*	3.88*
		Year of experience	3.20	3.90*
		Previous knowledge	4.25*	2.60
2	Physician	Age	4.10*	5.10*
		Gender	3.47	4.21*
		Year of experience	3.90*	3.60
		Previous knowledge	3.88*	3.00
3	Dentist	Age	1.70	4.20*
		Gender	3.64	4.68*
		Year of experience	5.26*	3.64
		Previous knowledge	3.25	3.92*

Conti.. Table No. 2: Association between awareness's, attitude and demographic variables

S. N.	Category	Variables	Knowledge (x2 value)	Attitude (x2 value)
4	Physiotherapist	Age	4.19*	4.23*
		Gender	3.64	3.40
		Year of experience	5.26*	3.85*
		Previous knowledge	3.25	3.90*

(df: 3 Table value 3.84, $P < 0.05$ level, * Significant)

Discussion

The study results highlights that the health care professionals had awareness on nurse led clinic through the peers and scientific journals whereas physiotherapist did not had any information on nurse led clinics. It was in congruence with Banahan B, Sharpe T¹⁰ that the previous knowledge was found to be an important determinant of health care professionals especially the physician's approval of nurse practitioners and significantly associated with higher acceptance. It is emphasized that the awareness and publicity leads to better acceptance and recognition of nurse practitioners by the people in the field of nursing and health.

The health care professionals under study had average level of awareness on various aspects regarding nurse led clinics. Similarly Nasaif HA¹¹ too found that majority of primary care physicians had a poor understanding on nurse practitioners and their role, and how they functions in clinical practice, and educational requirements and academic preparation to become an nurse practitioners. It is imperative that the health care professionals and the public needs have clear understanding and awareness on nurse practitioners and their role in the society for better acceptance and effective health care delivery system. The results envisages that all the health care professionals under study did had positive attitude towards nurse led clinics, the facts was in acceptance of Sofer M, Dalia A¹² that since 1990's the physician attitudes toward nurse practitioners utilization and employment have become more positive.

It is a need of the hour and essential that all health care team shall have a similar attitude and positivity towards nurse practitioners and nurse led clinics, thus the statutory bodies like Indian Nursing Council, State Nurses and Registration Councils and

Government and Professional Nursing Associations like Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI), Nursing Research Society of India (NRSI), and Society of Midwives India (SOMI) etc shall initiate several steps and strategy to make sure that the initiation of independent nurse practitioners shall be legal and acceptable to all. Meeting the societal needs and health care demands the need of the hour is to have independent nurse practitioners and starting of nurse led clinics in various discipline and specialty.

Conclusion

Study findings showed that the health care professionals had average knowledge and good attitude towards nurse led clinic. Alongside the demographic characteristics like age, gender, experience had significant association with the study variables. The role of advanced nursing practice shall be introduced gradually to the overcome resistance and ensuring successful implementation of the role with the support of government, statutory bodies and other professional organizations.¹³

Education and discussion with healthcare professions and health policymakers are needed to ensure they are fully informed about the nurse led clinics and its potential positioning and advantages etc. Alongside there is need for multidisciplinary approach and collaboration for the planning and implementation of nurse led clinics in India. The current scenario demands necessitates requirement of independent nurse practitioner to overcome the disparity in health care and its utilization.

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