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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE ON WARNING SIGNS AND SCREENING OF SELECTED CANCER OF FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM AMONG GNM STUDENTS AT SELECTED NURSING SCHOOLS IN KERALA.

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Abstract: Cancers are the major lifestyle disease burden faced by our country. The health workers have a central responsibility in prevention, care and treatment. Therefore, it is important to assess knowledge towards cancer among health professionals. The aim of this study was to assess the knowledge regarding selected cancer of female reproductive system among GNM students at selected nursing schools in Kerala. Descriptive approach and descriptive design were used for the present study.60 sample were selected by using non-probability sampling technique. Findings of the study revealed that majority of GNM students 45 (75%) had inadequate knowledge. The knowledge score mean of 60 samples were 11.03 with standard deviation of 2.94. With regards to the association between level of knowledge and socio demographic variables, no association was found between knowledge level and the sociodemographic variables at $p<0.05$. The study concluded that adequate measures have to be taken to improve the knowledge of nursing students.

Keywords - Warning signs and screening, female reproductive system cancer

I. INTRODUCTION

In the early 90s when revolution was occurring in the healthcare system throughout the world, India was facing a lot of deaths due to communicable diseases [1]. In modern era where urbanisation, industrialisation, lifestyle changes are influencing the disease pattern, we can see a paradigm shift from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes and hypertension [2]. Cancer prevalence in India is estimated to be around 2.5 million, with over 8 lakh new cases and 5.5 lakh deaths occurring every year. The greatest increase among females is for the Cancer of female reproductive system such as Cancer Breast, Cervix, Ovary, Uterine and Vulvar. Knowledge and specific information have an important role in cancer screening and management.

A retrospective study was undertaken to assess the prevalence of malignancy of female reproductive system, at Rotas district of Bihar. The study results showed that cervical carcinoma emerged as the commonest with 56.9%, closely followed by Breast cancer, followed by endometrial carcinoma (22.4%), and ovarian cancers (15.5%). The vaginal and vulval cancers were found to be the lowest with 3.4% and 1.7% cases respectively.[3]

A systematic review and meta-analyses conducted on incidence, prevalence, and mortality of breast cancer in 29 states and seven union territories of India. The result shows that Asia has 44% of the world's breast cancer deaths with 39% of overall new breast cancer cases diagnosed. The highest rate of occurrence was found to be in Delhi (41 per 100,000 women) followed by Chennai (37.9 per 100,000 women), Bangalore (34.4 per 100,000 women), and Thiruvananthapuram district (33.7 per 100,000 women).[4]

Another study conducted to assess the burden of cervical cancer in India and review the performance characteristics of available cervical cancer screening tools, so as to provide evidence-based recommendations for application of most practically suited screening test to be used in resource-poor field settings. MEDLINE and Web of Science electronic database were searched from January 1990 to December 2015. The study results shows that In India, cervical cancer contributes to approximately 6–29% of all cancers in women.[5]

The above studies showed that the incidence and mortality rate of female reproductive system cancers are increasing in India.

A study was conducted to assess the knowledge and practices relating to screening for breast cancer among women in Delhi. Data were obtained from 222 adult women using a pretested self-administered questionnaire. Findings of the study highlight the need for awareness about technique of breast self-examination, screening mammography, awareness regarding risk factors etc. [6]. The nurses have a central responsibility in prevention, care and treatment. Therefore, it is important to assess knowledge towards cancer among nursing students. Gained information can be used to direct educational programs

II. OBJECTIVES

- To assess the knowledge of nursing students regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system
- To determine the association between the knowledge among the GNM students with their selected demographic variables.

2.1Assumption

- Selected GNM students may have some knowledge regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.

2.2 Hypothesis

H_1: There will be a significant association between pre-test level of knowledge on warning signs and screening of selected cancer of female reproductive system with selected demographic variables of nursing students at $p < 0.05$ level of significance.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1Research Study Design

The study design is a descriptive study concerning knowledge of warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system among GNM students studying at selected nursing schools at Kerala.

3.2 Setting of the study

The study conducted at CSI School of nursing Kollam, Kerala

3.3Variables

- Age, religion, place of residence, educational status, age of menarche, type of family, family monthly income, previous awareness on warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.
- Dependent variables

Knowledge of GNM students regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.

3.4 Population

The population of the study is GNM students studying at CSI School of nursing Kollam, Kerala

3.5Sample size

60 GNM nursing students studying in selected nursing schools at Kerala, who fulfills the inclusion criteria were selected as samples.

3.6 Sampling technique

Sampling is a process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. Convenient sampling technique is used for this study

3.7 Criteria for selection of sample

Inclusion criteria: The study includes the nursing students

- Who are females
- Who give consent for the study
- Who comes under selected nursing schools. Kerala
- Who can read and write English

Exclusion criteria: The study exclude the nursing students

- Who are males
- Who are not present on the day of data collection
- Who have already attended training session on warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.

3.8 Data collection period

Two weeks

3.9 Ethical Consideration

- Formal permission was obtained from the concerned authority of the selected School of nursing, Kerala
- Written informed consent was obtained from the study samples. There was no ethical issue aroused during the study period.
- The students were informed that their participation was purely on voluntary basis. They had the freedom to withdraw from the study if needed at any time and that the confidentiality of the data will be maintained

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected were analyzed with help of both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings have been organized and presented under the following section.

Section A: Frequency and Percentage distribution of socio demographic variables.

Section B: Level of knowledge regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system among the nursing students

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects with regards to demographic variables

n =60

SI. N	Socio demographic variables	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Age in years		
	17-18	45	75
	19-20	15	25
2	Religion		
	Hindu	49	81.6
	Christian	5	8.3
	Muslim	6	10
3	Educational Status		
	I GNM	40	66.6
	II GNM	20	33.3
4	Place of residence		
	Rural	20	33.3
	Urban	40	66.6
5	Age of menarche		
	Before 12 years	12	20
	12-17 years	48	80
6	Type of family		
	Nuclear	28	47
	Joint	32	53
7	Family monthly income		
	Below 10000	5	8.3
	10000-15000	10	16.7
	Above 15000	45	75
8	Have you attended any awareness programme on warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system		
	yes	-	-
	no	60	100

Result: Table 1 Describes the Demographic Data of Samples Regarding:

- The distribution of the college students according to the age found that 75% samples belong to the age group of 17-18 years.25% belongs to the age group 19-20years.
- In religion, majority of the college students 49 (81.6%) were Hindus and the least 5 (8.3%) were Christians.
- Majority of the college students were (66.6%) in I year GNM and 33.3% were in II Year GNM
- For place of residence 66.6% living in urban area and 33.3% living in rural area
- As per the findings of the study majority of the samples 48 (80%) attained menarche between the age 12-17 years, and 20% attained menarche before 12 years.
- 47% of samples were from nuclear family and 53% of samples were from joint family.
- In relation to monthly family income 75% of the samples had a family income above 15000, whereas 16.7% had monthly income between 10000-15000.Only 8.3% of the samples had a family income below 10000.
- Out of 60 participants, none of them had participated in awareness programme regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge level regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.

n=60

Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate (<50%)	45	75
Moderately adequate (51-75%)	15	25
Adequate (> 75%)	-	-
Total	60	100

Result: The table 2 shows that 75% of samples had inadequate knowledge and 25% had moderate knowledge regarding warning signs and screening of selected cancers of female reproductive system.

Table 3: Range, mean, median and standard deviation of knowledge score of samples

n=60

knowledge	Min. score	Max. score	Max. possible score	Mean	SD	median	Percentages mean score (%)
knowledge	6	16	26	11.03	2.94	10	42.4

Result: Data in Table 3 shows that the knowledge score range 6-16 with mean 11.03 and standard deviation 2.94.

Table 4: Association between pre-test level of knowledge with socio demographic variables

n= 60

SI.NO	Sociodemographic variables	Level of knowledge		Chi square value $\chi 2$	P value
		Above median	Below median		
1	Age in years				
	17-18	18	27	$\chi 2$= 0 df = 1	1 NS
	19-20	6	9		
2	Religion				
	Hindu	19	30	$\chi 2$= 0.167 df = 1	0. 682 NS
	Non-Hindu	5	6		
3	Educational status				
	I GNM	14	26	$\chi 2$= 1.25 df = 1	0.263 NS
	II GNM	10	10		
4	Place of Residence			$\chi 2$= 1.25 df = 1	0.263 NS
	Rural	10	10		
	Urban	14	26		
5	Age of menarche				
	Below 12 years	6	6	$\chi 2$= 0.625 df=1	0.429 NS
	12-17 years	18	30		
6	Type of family				
	Nuclear	14	14	$\chi 2$= 2.187 df = 1	0.139 NS
	Joint	10	22		
7	Monthly family income				
	Below 10000	3	2	$\chi 2$= 1.6204 df = 2	0.444 NS
	10000-15000	5	5		
	Above 15000	16	29		

Result: Data in Table 4 shows that the findings of association of knowledge score and socio demographic variable shows that the calculated p value for age, religion, educational status, place of residence, type of family age of menarche, family monthly income is lower than the table value, at 0.05 level of significance. So, there is no significant association between the pre-test knowledge score regarding warning signs and screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system. Thus, H_2 hypothesis is 'rejected'.

IMPLICATIONS

Nursing practice

Nurses are an integral part of today's health care delivery system. Nurses spent more time with the clients than any other health care member and so they know the routine and characteristics of every patient

- This study helps the staff nurses to evaluate their own knowledge about warning signs and screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system.
- Nursing personnel working in the hospital as well as in the community can understand the importance of screening and early treatment of reproductive system cancers in women

Nursing education

- This study helps to raise awareness among student nurses and nurse educators regarding about warning signs and screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system.
- It is helpful for the nurses to conduct community program on screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system.

Nursing administration

Nurse administrators are responsible for conducting in-service education program for the staff and students to create awareness about warning signs and screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system so that this knowledge can be imparted to the public.

- The nursing administer can take part in developing protocols, standing orders related to designing the health education program and strategies for staff nurses regarding screening and early diagnosis and treatment of female reproductive system cancers.
- The nursing administer can mobilize the available resource personnel towards the health education of staff nurses regarding female reproductive system cancers.
- The nurse administrators should explore their potentials and encourage innovative ideas in the preparation of an appropriate teaching material. He or she should organize sufficient manpower, money and material for disseminating health information

Nursing research

No profession can exist with or without research to develop its body of knowledge to test its strategies, to ensure that its action makes a different. The health care environment today is dynamic and more demanding. There is a need to promote research-based practice and the use of evaluation methods to measure outcome and document the quality and cost-effective care as nursing moves towards an independent professional practice mode.

- The study throws light on warning signs and screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system. There is a lot of scope for exploration in this area. There is a need to carry out more researches to detect the knowledge of healthcare providers about the same study.
- Nurse should come forward to take up unsolved questions in the field of screening of reproductive system cancer to carry out studies and publish them for the benefit of youth, patients, publics and nursing fraternity. The public and private agencies should also encourage research in this field through materials and funds.

Limitations of the study

- 60 GNM students
- Selected nursing schools at Kerala
- 2 weeks period of data collection
- Students who can read and write English

Recommendations

On the basis of the study the following recommendation have been made:

- A similar study can be replicated on a large sample to generalize the findings.
- A comparative study on the effectiveness of practice used currently should be carried out

CONCLUSION

The study results showed that 75% had inadequate knowledge and 25% had moderate knowledge. knowledge score range 6-16 with mean 11.03 and standard deviation 2.94. The association between the knowledge scores and socio demographic variables of nursing students were calculated by using $\chi 2$ test at $p<0.05$ significance level. The chi square analysis showed that there was no significance with any of the socio demographic variable at $p > 0.05$. Hence research hypotheses stated as there is significant association between level of knowledge and selected socio demographic variables was rejected

SUMMARY

The overall experience of conducting this study was a satisfying one, as there was good co-operation by the nursing students. This study was a new learning experience for the researcher. The result of the present study shows that there is a great need for the GNM students to update their knowledge on warning signs and screening for selected cancers of female reproductive system.

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