

Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice regarding Geriatric Care among Nurses at Tertiary Care Hospitals in Karachi, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to determine the knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding geriatric care among nurses at public and private tertiary care hospitals in Karachi.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Dr. Ruth K.M Pfau Civil Hospital which is a public setting and at Dr. Ziauddin Hospital in North Nazimabad, which is a private hospital. Registered nurses with a valid license who were working at these two hospitals were the target population. Sample size was calculated by the software 'OpenEpi' version 3.0 using a 95% confidence level with 80% power of the study. The participants were selected using consecutive sampling technique.

Results: Out of all the participants (n=374 nurses), 190 (50.8%) were male and 184 (49.2%) were female. The majority of nurses demonstrated good knowledge 157 (42%), positive attitude 305 (81.6%), and good practice level 289 (77.3%). In addition, most nurses from public hospitals had good geriatric care knowledge 92 (41.4%), positive attitude 181(81.5%) and good practice level 182 (82.0%) compared to a private hospital. This was statistically significant with (p-value<0.05).

Conclusion: Over all, this study found that nurses working in both private and public tertiary care hospitals had good knowledge of geriatric care, a positive attitude, and good practice towards caring for the elderly patients.

Keywords: Attitude, geriatric care, knowledge, nurses, practice

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, the human population is living longer than before, and the majority of people are expected to live for sixty years or more¹. Recently, older population has probably grown due to a reduction in mortality and persistent improvement in survival across the globe². Ageing is a process of growing older that may lead to permanent physical, mental, psychological, and social changes³.

The global population aged sixty years will increase from 1 billion to 1.4 billion in 2030, and it is also estimated that by 2030 one out of six people will be 60 years old or above¹. The increasing number of older people leads to a greater burden on healthcare delivery systems globally⁴. According to the United Nations, in 2017, 39% of hospitalized patients in all healthcare settings were older adults⁵. The ageing process increases the risk of disability, dependence, risk of falls, and death among old people and several conditions such as dementia, osteoarthritis, cataracts, diabetes, depression, hypertension, and other issues⁶. The increase in the elderly's life expectancy means more dependency and greater demand for long-term care due to various health issues associated with ageing⁷. Current demographic and healthcare patterns indicate that the demand for geriatric nurses is growing faster due to the high rate of hospitalization among elderly people⁸. Globally, the nurse shortage with a parallel rise in the proportion of the older population highlights the need to have more nurses specialize in the field of geriatrics

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and be willing to care for older adults⁹. In addition, due to the increasing number of older patients being admitted to hospitals, there is a growing demand for geriatric nurses¹⁰. Nurses have an essential role in recognizing and fulfilling the physical and mental health requirements of elderly people in a range of locations, including their own homes, supported living, nursing home, hospital, or residential care. Nurses with good knowledge, practice and positive attitudes directly affect the quality of care of elderly patients and also play a role in their lifestyle and health¹¹. Hence, this study aimed to determine the level of knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding geriatric care among nurses at private and public tertiary care hospitals in Karachi.

METHODOLOGY

IRB/ERC Approval:

This 7-month study, conducted from February to August 2022, received ethical approval from the Ethical Review Committee of Ziauddin University with reference code: 4680122SKNUR.

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted to determine the knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding geriatric care, of nurses at private and public tertiary care hospitals in Karachi. The study was conducted at two hospitals Dr. Ziauddin Hospital, and Dr. Ruth KM Pfau Civil Hospital, Karachi. Registered nurses working in public and private tertiary care teaching hospitals were the target population. Registered nurses of both genders with valid licenses from the Pakistan Nursing and Midwifery Council, having experience of more than six months, and giving direct care to elderly patients, were included in the study. While, nurses who were not willing to participate, those working part-time, and nurse interns were excluded from the study. The sample size was calculated via online software, OpenEpi version 3.0. For sample size calculation, taking 76.4% proportion of 'good knowledge' among nurses. Considering the aspect of knowledge, the calculated sample size was 277 for this study. In addition, 97 subjects were added for the accuracy of finding and generalization of the results. Thus, the final sample size taken for the study was 374. Subjects were selected through a consecutive sampling method. The research tools 'knowledge, attitude, and practice' were adopted from the previous studies^{12,13}. Regarding the knowledge of the care of the elderly, the tool consists of 28 multiple-choice questions with one right answer. A score of =80% was considered excellent knowledge, a score between 70-80% good knowledge, a score between 60-69% average

knowledge, and a score of <60% was regarded as poor knowledge. The attitude was assessed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. All items were scored from 1 to 5, where 5 stands for 'strongly agree' and 1 for 'strongly disagree'. It consisted of 16 items. The practice section involved seven questions to evaluate whether the participants had completed these seven essential nursing care practices for the elderly. Each question in this section had two answers 'did it or not'. The participants could get one score for every practice they completed. The total score ranged from 0 to a maximum of 7.

For the analysis of data Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 24.0) was used. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for all demographic variables. For the inferential statistics, Chi-square test was used to determine associations of knowledge, attitudes, and practices of nurses.

RESULTS

The mean \pm SD age of the participants was found to be 32.1 \pm 5.34 years. Referring to the marital status of the participants, 120 (32.1%) were single, and 231 (61%) were married. Referring to the participants' working hours per day, 123 (32.9%) participants worked for 6 hours, 132 (35.3%) participants worked for 8 hours, and 119 (31.8%) participants worked for more than 8 hours per day (Table-1).

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Variables (n= 374)	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	190 (50.8)
Female	184 (49.2)
Marital Status	
Single	120 (32.1)
Married	231 (61)
Widow/widower	6 (1.6)
Divorce	17 (4.5)
Average Working Hours Per Day	
6 hours	123 (32.9)
8 hours	132 (35.3)
More than 8 hours	119 (31.8)
Qualifications of Nurses	
RN Diploma	87 (23.2)
Post RN BSN Degree	145 (38.7)
BSN Degree	142 (37.9)

Table-2 depicts the knowledge, attitude, and practice of nurses regarding Geriatric Care. About the knowledge of nurses regarding geriatric care, the results show that 157 (42.0%) had good knowledge. Out of the total population, 305 (81.6%) participants showed a positive attitude towards geriatric care. Out of the total 374 participants, 289 (77.3%) had good practice of geriatric care.

Table 2: Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice Regarding Geriatric Care among Nurses

Variables	Frequency (%) n=374
Knowledge	
Excellent	56 (15.0)
Good	157 (42.0)
Average	123 (32.9)
Poor	38 (10.2)
Attitude	
Positive	305 (81.6)
Negative	69(18.4)
Practice	
Good	289 (77.3)
Bad	85(22.7)

Table-3 shows the association between the nurses' knowledge of geriatric care in public and private hospitals. Out of the total participants in public hospitals, 56 (25.2%) nurses were found to have excellent knowledge as compared to the nurses in a private hospital, none of whom scored excellent ($p < 0.01$). It was found that more public sector nurses had good knowledge 92 (41.4%) as compared to nurses working in private hospitals 65 (42.8%) with a significance of ($P < 0.01$). Furthermore, it was found that more nurses 65 (42.8%) working in a private hospital had average knowledge as compared to nurses working in a public hospital 58(26.1%) with a significance of ($P < 0.01$). In addition, the majority of nurses working in the private hospital 22 (14.5%) were found to have poor knowledge compared to public hospital nurses 16 (7.2%).

Table 3: Association of Knowledge with Work-setup

Level of Knowledge	Public Hospital	Private Hospital	p-value
	Frequency (%) n=222	Frequency (%) n=152	
Excellent	56(25.2)	0(0.0)	<0.01
Good	92(41.4)	65(42.8)	
Average	58(26.1)	65(42.8)	
Poor	16(7.2)	22(14.5)	

The chi-square test was applied for Association. p -value = 0.05 was considered significant

DISCUSSION

Every human goes through the process of ageing. According to most gerontologists, it commences in the fourth decade of life and ends at death. A person goes through diverse changes throughout this period including biological, physiological, and psychosocial changes which lead to the deterioration of the quality of life¹⁴. Therefore, geriatric nursing care is nowadays considered the most popular speciality in the field of nursing, and it needs unique skills and knowledge¹⁵.

Good knowledge, practice, and attitude from nurses in caring for the elderly can improve patient outcomes, as well as satisfaction from patients and families. It can also help caregivers provide older people with the care they need¹⁶. Therefore, the present study intended to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding geriatric care among nurses and to compare this knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding geriatric care in nurses of private and public tertiary care hospitals.

The existing literature presents many studies that address nurses' knowledge, attitude, and practice for the care of the elderly in different settings¹⁷. In the current study, a total of 374 nurses were recruited from private and public hospitals. Out of these, 222 (59.3%) worked at a public hospital and the remaining 152 (40.6%) worked at a private hospital. The majority of study participants showed good knowledge 157 (43.6%) related to geriatric care. While among the remaining participants, 123 (32.9%) had average knowledge and 38 (10.2%) had poor knowledge about geriatric care. This shows that the majority of nurses had enough knowledge to care for geriatric patients.

These findings are consistent with a previous study which indicated that an almost similar frequency of knowledge among nurses, with higher frequency lying in average and good levels, and a lower frequency of poor knowledge was found¹⁸. However, contradictory results were also observed in a previous study which depicted that 37.2% nurses had over all good knowledge regarding the care of older people while 62.8% had poor knowledge¹⁷. Similar findings like a higher frequency of poor knowledge were also observed in another study. This difference in results may be the consequence of educational backgrounds and academic qualifications. The majority of the participants in the present study were Post RN 145 (38.7%) and BSN 142 (37.9%), and fewer were diploma holders 87 (23.2%). While, in the studies mentioned above, the participants had poor educational backgrounds and diploma level of education¹⁹.

The current study shows positive attitudes among nurses towards the care of older patients were more frequent (81.6%) as compared to negative attitudes (19.1%) These results show the encouraging and favourable attitude of the majority of nurses. Additionally, it also showed that good knowledge may have a significant role in the positive attitude toward geriatric care. Similarly, according to the findings of a previous study conducted in Pakistan, 60% of nurses had an average knowledge score and (51.8%) a favourable positive attitude score towards care for older individuals, indicating that better knowledge may lead to a favourable attitude¹⁸. The finding of the recent study was contradictory to a previous study in which the nurses' attitude was unfavourable towards elderly care due to a lack of knowledge¹⁷.

The current study indicates that the majority of nurses (77.3%) have a good level of practice towards geriatric care. On the other hand, a study found that 84% of participants do not practice good geriatric care²⁰. It shows a higher frequency of bad practices as compared to knowledge and attitude, which could be due to the lack of training regarding geriatric care.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study concluded that the nurses from the public sector demonstrated good knowledge more frequently as compared to the nurses of private hospitals, but the attitude and practice were observed to be slightly better in private hospital nurses.

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Authors' Contributions: **SK:** Conceptualization of the study, data collection, and analysis **SK:** Supervision, review of the manuscript, conducting literature reviews, and overseeing data collection **R:** Drafting the manuscript and participating in the editing process

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