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A study to Assess the Attitude of Care Givers towards the Care of Terminally ill Subjects at Tertiary Care Hospital: A Statistical Approach

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Abstract: Need of the study: One of the important factors influencing a successful delivery of palliative health care is the health care professionals’ knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and experiences, which determine not only their procedure but also their behavior during evaluation and treatment of patients. Nurses play most valuable role in care of terminally ill patients. Along with nurses or health care workers, there is a real need that the care givers of terminally ill patients should also have the required proper knowledge about how to take care of the patients.

Hence the aim of this study was to know about the attitude among care givers of terminally ill subjects at a tertiary care hospital which would help the care givers to enhance their knowledge.

Objectives:

1. To assess the attitude of care givers regarding care of terminally ill subjects.
2. To find association between attitude and selected demographic variables.

Material & Methods used for the study is the evaluative approach with only study group. Study was conducted on sample of 25 care givers of the terminally ill patient. The data were collected by structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: Majority of care givers 19 (76%) shows strong agreement, whereas 6 (24%) of care givers agree with the questions asked. No one 0(0%) had disagreement towards the questions asked.

Overall there was positive attitude in care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

Conclusion: There was border line association was found between occupation and attitude of care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects. On-going teaching and health education programs can further improve the attitude of care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

Keywords: Terminally, Care Givers, Ill, Palliative.

INTRODUCTION

Death is an unavoidable thing that affects every human being. Nurses are present at both the starting and the end of life, and play a key role in caring for dying patients. That role is seen as one of the most stressful sides of nursing ^[1]. “Palliative care (PC) is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems like physical, psychosocial and spiritual” (WHO, 2006) ^[2]. According to the WHO estimates more than 4 million people will benefit from palliative care. <1% of those who need palliative care services have any access to such services in the country ^[3]. It is a comprehensive approach where teams work together as one namely family members, palliative care providers, nursing assistants, social workers, physiotherapists, volunteers and community to relieve, and ease the pain (physical, mental and spiritual) of the sufferer and offer a support system until their end of life ^[4].

Palliative care is typically viewed as being the passionate care of a patient who is close to death. Some chronically ill patients die from the side effect of treatment ^[5].

Palliative patients have to be hospitalized, because the problems cannot be handled in the home situation or because sufficient family care is lacking at home. More than half of the home patients move in the last months for dying still to another setting because of acute medical problems, lack of professional home care or overload of the informal care ^[6].

One of the important factors influencing a successful delivery of palliative health care is the health care professionals’ knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and experiences, which determine not only their procedure but also their behavior during evaluation and treatment of patients. Nurses are the most valuable palliative care team members who address the physical, functional, social, and spiritual dimensions of care ^[7]. Nurses as well as other healthcare workers often feel not well-prepared for their task in palliative care and are much in need of more expertise in the field of pain and symptom management, communication and dealing with ethical dilemma’s ^[8-11].

Along with nurses or health care workers, there is a real need that the care givers of terminally ill subjects should also have the required proper knowledge about how to take care of the subjects.

Moreover, the knowledge, awareness and attitude of care givers about care of terminally ill subjects is very minimal as per various studies hence the aim and objective of this study was to know about the attitude among care givers of terminally ill subjects at a tertiary care hospital which would help the care givers to enhance their knowledge.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The evaluative approach with one group design was used. The secondary data available was used for the study purpose. Study was conducted on sample of 25 care givers of the terminally ill subjects in selected tertiary hospital by using convenient sampling technique.

STATISTICAL METHODS

Data were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS version 20.0 with regard to objectives of the study using descriptive and Inferential Statistics. Descriptive Statistics namely frequency and percentage was done. T test was used to check the association between selected demographic variables and attitude of care givers of the terminally ill subjects.

RESULTS

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of care givers of terminally ill subjects according to socio demographic parameters

N=25

Sr. No.	Socio Demographic Variables	No.	%
1	Age		
	<20 yrs	0	0.00
	20-30 yrs	5	20.00
	31-40 yrs	4	16.00
	>40 yrs	16	64.00
2	Gender		
	Male	9	36.00
	Female	16	64.00
3	Educational Qualification		
	Illiterate	4	16.00
	Primary	8	32.00
	Secondary	8	32.00
	Graduate	5	20.00
4	Occupation		
	Farmer	11	44.00
	Job/Service	4	16.00
	Business	2	8.00
	Other	8	32.00
5	Channel of Communication		
	T.V.	9	36.00
	Radio	1	4.00
	Newspaper	3	12.00
	T.V. and Newspaper	12	48.00

Table 2: Classification of attitude of care givers of terminally ill patients at tertiary care hospital

N=25

Level of Attitude	Score	Level of Care givers	
		Frequency	Percentage
Disagree	1-15	0	0
Agree	16-30	6	24
Strongly agree	31-45	19	76
Total		25	100

The table 2 shows the level of attitude of care givers of terminally ill subjects in selected tertiary hospital. It is noticeable that majority of care givers 19 (76%) shows strong agreement, whereas 6 (24%) of care givers agree with the questions asked. No one 0(0%) had disagreement towards the questions asked.

Overall there was positive attitude in care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

The attitude of male care givers was 32.31 ± 4.44 and attitude of female care givers was 33.78 ± 3.05 , ($t= 0.88$, $p= 0.39$). So, there was no association between gender and attitude. Attitude about taking care of terminally ill subjects is higher in females than males.

The attitude of illiterate and primary educated care givers was 32.08 ± 2.43 and attitude of care givers having secondary education or graduation was 33.54 ± 4.39 ($t= 1.04$, $p= 0.31$). So, there was no association between educational qualification and attitude. Attitude about taking care of terminally ill subjects is higher in care givers with more education.

Higher education is not providing more attitudes. It may vary from person to person.

The attitude of care givers doing farming or job was 33.87 ± 4.02 and attitude of care givers doing business or other was 31.30 ± 2.21 ($t= 2.05$, $p= 0.05$). So, there was border line association between occupation and attitude ($p=0.05$). Attitude about taking care of terminally ill patients was more in care givers doing farming or job than care givers doing business.

DISCUSSION

Some research studies have been conducted in National and International level to assess attitude about taking care of terminally ill subjects in care givers.

Results revealed, majority of care givers 19 (76%) shows strong agreement, whereas 6 (24%) of care givers agree with the questions asked. No one 0(0%) had disagreement towards the questions asked. Overall there was positive attitude in care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

Which was contradictory to Knowledge regarding services given and time taken (early/late) was very much inadequate

in general population than in health care givers. Unfortunately, only 9% of general population and 38% of health care givers were opting to start palliative care early (immediately after the diagnosis of terminally ill disease is taken place), whereas the majority of population in both of the groups did not know about early intervention^[12].

Most nurses attitudes levels towards palliative care were moderate attitude 54 (56.2%), 36 (37.5%) poor attitude, and 6(6.2%) good attitude level^[13].

The description of attitude scores shows that 56.2% of them had moderate attitude towards palliative care^[13]. This finding was in agreement with the findings that 259 (76%) had favorable attitude towards PC^[14] and indicated 92.8% of nursing students had favorable attitude (56.7± 8.5) towards palliative care^[15].

CONCLUSION

From the data analysis and findings of the present study, it is concluded that, majority of care givers 19 (76%) shows strong agreement, whereas 6 (24%) of care givers agree with the questions asked. No one 0(0%) had disagreement towards the questions asked.

Overall there was positive attitude in care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

There was border line association was found between occupation and attitude of care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

On-going teaching and health education programs can further improve the attitude of care givers towards care of terminally ill subjects.

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