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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ATTITUDE OF NURSING STUDENTS TOWARDS BIOETHICS LUDHIANA, PUNJAB, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

It is widely viewed that fostering bioethics among members of the nursing profession is of profound importance due to increased progress of medical science and technology and lack of awareness about bioethics among undergraduate students which has rendered prior views of ethics insufficient for health care professionals. As the student nurses are the future professional nurses, so their foundation of bioethics needs to be laid at the preliminary level as they reach the actual clinical practice. This way they can take nursing profession at the highest level of perfection and standards. In view of this a descriptive research was planned to assess attitude of nursing students by using attitude scale to promote bioethics through Continuing Nursing Education (CNE). Total 300 nursing students participated in the study as subjects. The data was collected keeping in view the ethical considerations. The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. Findings revealed that 88% students had positive attitude and 13.9% had negative attitude towards bioethics in nursing. It may be recommended that similar type of studies can be conducted in other medical institutes to promote and impregnate the bioethics in the foundation of nursing profession which is the student nurses.

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INTRODUCTION

Bioethics emerged in 1970s in the USA and only gradually received public attention. When exploring ethical issues in nursing, there are two possible approaches, one is intrinsic (i.e. applied ethics) and the other is extrinsic (i.e. formal ethics). Through statutes, regulations, and decisions in specific cases, the law can provide guidance about what healthcare professionals can or cannot do. Therefore nurses should be familiar with the law regarding issues in clinical ethics. It is widely viewed that fostering bioethics among members of the nursing profession is of profound importance. The increasing progress of medical science and technology has rendered prior views of ethics insufficient for guiding health care professionals in dealing with complex clinical bioethical dilemmas. (Burkhardt Ma, Nathaniel, 2002)

Need of the Study: Among healthcare professionals, nursing staff are on the frontline, having the most direct role in caring for the patients. Although nurses are not the medical decision makers, they more often than not are the ones who carry out the decisions made and advocate the patients' rights. Being such critical members of the health care teams, nurses must undergo bioethics education. They need to have bioethical sensitivity and the ability to make sure that all medical procedures are error free so that they can fulfil their duty of protecting their patients. The American Nurses Association established the association's code of ethics in 1950 and renamed it as the American Nurses Association ethical code. The international council of nurse drafted a code for nurses in 1953, which was reaffirmed by many countries in 1973. Hence, there was early international recognition of bioethics guidelines. Hence, after this comprehensive survey of bioethics education is urgently needed to identify the gaps between education and clinical practice. It is hoped that after the completion of the research study and findings will help in increasing the nursing professionals' knowledge regarding

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bioethics and sensitivity to clinical dilemmas and to make them capable of thinking clearly while making sound judgement supported by ethical consideration.

Operational Definition

Bioethics: Branch of applied ethics and requires the expertise of people working in a wide range of disciplines including, medicine, the life sciences, nursing and social sciences.

Student Nurses: A person who is completing diploma and degree program in nursing

Aim of the study: To assess the attitude of student nurses regarding Bioethics in Nursing in selected College of Nursing, Ludhiana, Punjab with an aim to develop persistent bioethics education in order to enhance their decision making abilities.

Assumption: Student nurses may have positive attitude regarding bioethics in nursing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

300 student nurses filled structured attitude scale (4-point Likert scale) containing 34 statements which were divided into three sections ie, Personal Ethics, Attitude towards Ethics, Advance Directives and End of Life Care Issues. The reliability of the tool was 0.9.

Research Approach and Design: A non-experimental research design and quantitative research approach was used.

Research Setting: The study was conducted in college of nursing, CMC & Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample of 300 student nurses was selected with purposive sampling technique.

RESULTS

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data in accordance with the objectives.

Table 1. Criterion Measure

Level	Score
Positive	≥51
Negative	<51

Table No. 2 Findings related to sample characteristics reveal that

Variables	n	Mean	Mean %
Age (years) 19-21	158	20.2	57
22-24	74	16.3	26
25 & above	43	20.6	15
Gender Male	67	18.2	24
Female	208	19.6	75.6
Course of study	85	19.2	30
GNM	147	19	53
B.Sc Nursing	32	20.7	11.6
Post Basic Nursing M.Sc Nursing	11	19.1	0.04
Source of Information			
Classroom teaching	00	00	00
Internet/mass media	28	21.357	10
Clinical teaching	25	22	.09
Workshop/conference	21	18.09	.76
no information	196	20.135	71

1st Objective: To assess the level of attitude of student nurses regarding bioethics in nursing.

Table 3. Distribution of Level of Attitude of student nurses regarding bioethics in nursing

Level	Score	n	%
Positive	≥51	239	88
Negative	<51	36	13.9

88% of student nurses had positive attitude and 13.9% had negative attitude towards Bioethics in Nursing

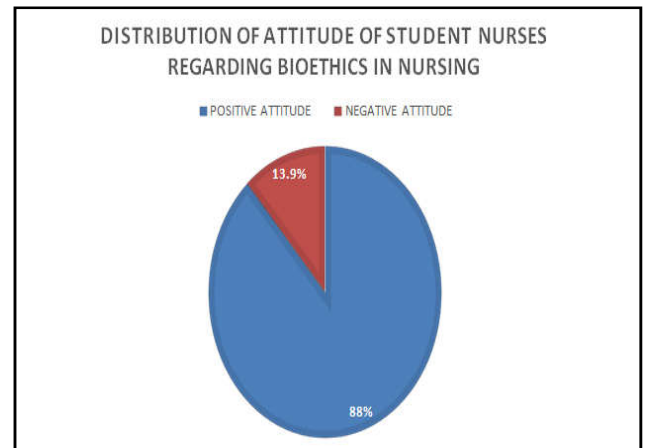


Table 4. Age of the students and course of study had significant impact on attitude of student nurses regarding bioethics.

Variables	n	Mean	SD	Statistical Ratio	P value
Age (in years)					
19-21	158	64.968	13.062	F=0.31	0.05(significant)
22-24	74	65.257	13.412		
25 & above	43	66.767	13.023		
Gender					
Male	67	66.373	10.767	t=0.749	0.05
Female	208	64.99	13.797		
Course of study					
GNM	85	64.341	13.132	F=1.129	0.05(significant)
B.Sc Nursing	147	65.116	13.066		
Post Basic	32	66.78	13.921		
M.sc Nursing	11	71.545	10.746		
Source of information					
Classroom teaching	00	00	00		
Internet/Mass Media	28	67.57	12.1	F=0.201	0.05
Clinical teaching	25	66.2	16.269		
Workshop/Conference	21	65.85	11.24		
No Information	196	64.6	12.2		

Objective 3: To find out the relationship of attitude of student nurses regarding bioethics in nursing with selected variables i.e. age, gender, course of study and source of information

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Recommendations

- The research study strongly recommends the Indian Nursing Council, the statutory licensing body of nurses

in India to ensure strict adherence of bioethics at bachelors and masters levels in nursing education as part of curriculum.

- At Least one clinical nurse should be in the institutional ethics committee in every medical and research institution.

Implications

In view of the results obtained from the study, implications are drawn that furthermore researches can be undertaken to enhance the knowledge and attitude of nurses towards bioethics and its implementation in clinical practice as a nurse.

Conclusion

- This study discovered that nursing students need to undergo systematic and persistent bioethics education in order to enhance their moral reasoning, judgment and clinical dilemmas as well as their decision making abilities encountered in clinical practice as a licensed nurse.

- However, all of these require adequate background knowledge and attitude towards bioethics.

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