



EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTIONAL MODULE ON THE KNOWLEDGE OF NURSES REGARDING LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO PATIENT CARE

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Abstract

When nurses are aware of their legal responsibilities and obligations, they will be better prepared to care for clients. It will also help them in acquiring a better efficiency and vigil in the services. Therefore, a quasi-experimental study to assess the effectiveness of instructional module on the knowledge of nurses regarding legal responsibilities in relation to patient care was done. The study covered 500 nurses, who are directly involved in the delivery of patient care in NIMS Hospital, S.K. Soni Hospital and Liberty Hospital of Jaipur city during the months of May 2011 to July 2011. Non-probability convenient sampling technique was used to select the samples. Knowledge questionnaire was developed and a structured opinionnaire was used to ascertain the opinion of samples. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by Split Half method and was found to be reliable ($r = 0.98$). The data revealed that there was significant difference between the mean knowledge scores in the pre-test (18.28) and in post-test (24.38). Hence, the calculated value of 't' (33.51) was greater than tabulated value of 't' (12.70) with $df - 1$ at 5% level of significance. Hence, it was concluded that post mean knowledge score of nurses following the administration of instructional module regarding legal responsibilities in relation to patients care showed a marked improvement.

Keywords: Instructional Module, Legal Responsibilities, Nurses, Patient Care

Introduction

Nurses are one of the largest group of professionals working in the Health Care System. A nurse while working in clinical setting plays a very important role from the time of admission to discharge of the patient in which orientation, meeting all type of needs especially biological and emotional needs, explaining rights to patient, maintaining confidentiality, taking informed consent and following so many roles when patient goes to parole, all come under legal responsibilities of a nurse. (Charles SC & Wilbert JR et al, 1985)¹.

As per the code of conduct, nurses are held accountable in varying degrees, the public, their employer, and their profession & most important their patients. With the introduction of the Consumer protection Act of 1986, which has been widened by the amendment of 1993, all professionals i.e. medical, architects, solicitors, chartered accountants etc. have come within the purview of the Act. Nursing also being a profession has come under the Act. The impact of health care consumer movement has promoted increased accountability on the

part of all health professional including nurses. The nurse must also be familiar with laws (Kanase B.Vijay, 2002)².

Nurses provide significant services to the society by helping to deliver quality health care to their patients. Without nurses, many life-saving medical procedures would not be possible. As nursing comes with tremendous responsibility, the profession has its fair share of legal and professional issues such as the issue of state licensure which was a process to ensure that nurses are properly qualified, additionally nurses are expected to adhere to high standards of care which was a legal term that refers to the expected procedures, tasks and risk assessment required of a nurse in their every day working environment. (Makiha .N, 2004)³.

If a nurse fails to meet the standards of care, she was considered to have committed malpractice. In addition to potentially harming or jeopardizing the life of a patient, nurses can lose their job for malpractice, be named in a lawsuit or even face criminal penalties. Hence nurses must know the law that governs their profession to avoid