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## **KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF HOSPITAL ACQUIRED INFECTIONS AND STANDARD PRECAUTIONS: A STUDY AMONG SENIOR BSC NURSING STUDENTS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Hospital Acquired Infections (HAIs) are a major challenge faced by the healthcare workers globally. Nurses and student nurses are a vulnerable group among the health care workers who are exposed to these HAIs. Practice of Standard Precautions (SPs) is the key in the prevention of these Hospital Acquired Infections (HAIs). Therefore, nurses and student nurses should have a sound knowledge regarding the HAIs, SPs and positive attitudes towards SPs. The objectives of this study were to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding prevention and control of HAIs and SPs among them. A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out using convenience sampling method among 112 senior B.Sc. nursing students (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year) in the University of Ruhuna. Socio - demographic data, Knowledge, practices and attitudes towards SPs were assessed by a self-administered pretested questionnaire. Association was assessed by Chi square by SPSS. Ethical approval was obtained from University of Ruhuna. The mean score ( $\pm$ SD) of the overall knowledge regarding HAIs was  $80.24 \pm 9.074$  with a total of 89 (79.5%) students scoring  $>75\%$  which is considered to be acceptable according to the existing standards. However, the knowledge of students differed in different domains with the highest scores (mean $\pm$ SD) being in the domain of hand hygiene ( $84.38 \pm 13.887$ ) and the least scores ( $77.05 \pm 12.850$ ) in the domain of concepts of prevention of HAIs and SPs. Regarding the positive attitudes and practice level, 66 (58.9%), 56 (50%) of students had average level (scored 50%-75%) of positive attitudes and practices respectively. The mean score ( $\pm$ SD) of the positive attitudes and practices were  $60.27 \pm 16.79$  and  $72.62 \pm 16.79$  respectively. Significant associations were not found between the knowledge, attitudes or practices. BSc. Nursing students in the University of Ruhuna are well aware regarding the prevention and control of HAIs and SPs. However, the attitudes and the practice level were below the accepted levels.

**Keywords:** Hospital Acquired Infections (HAIs), Standard Precautions (SPs)