



KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE ELDERLY AND ELDERLY CARE AMONG NURSING UNDERGRADUATES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

With increased number of people aged 60 years and older, the health and social systems will have to be prepared to ensure their health. Nurses being key personnel in health-care delivery, it is a vital requirement to prepare nursing undergraduates to promote health and wellness of the elderly and to deliver quality care. Previous studies have found deficiencies of knowledge on elderly care and negative attitudes towards elderly among nursing students. This study was aimed at assessing knowledge and attitudes towards elderly and elderly care among nursing undergraduates and determining the factors associated. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using a convenience sample of 220 students from second, third and fourth academic years of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ), University of Jaffna, and Kothelawala Defence University. A pretested self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medical Sciences, USJ. Data analysis was done using SPSS (Version 25). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Participants had moderate level of knowledge while their attitudes were slightly negative. The overall knowledge score ranged from 7 to 17 with a mean of 13(SD=1.98). The mean overall attitude score was 104.9 (SD =8.06) ranging from 84 to 131. There was a significant association between the overall knowledge and overall attitudes of undergraduates ($p<0.05$). Nursing undergraduates should be provided with adequate knowledge and relevant clinical and community exposure with elderly clients to enhance favourable attitudes and thereby the provision of quality elderly care.

Keywords: Elderly care, knowledge, attitudes, nursing undergraduates, Sri Lanka