

Assessment of Knowledge on Autism Spectrum Disorder among Nurses of Selected Hospital of Pune City

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Abstract

Background: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is pervasive and lifelong neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by impaired socialization, impaired verbal and nonverbal communication, and restricted interests and repetitive patterns of behaviour. The nurses' level of understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders can have a great impact on the prognosis of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This study is aimed at assessing knowledge of nurses about Autism spectrum Disorder. **Objectives:** To assess the level of knowledge among nurses regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder. **Material and method:** Quantitative Non Experimental research approach and descriptive research design was used with 50 sample size. Tool consisted of demographic variables and structured questionnaire with 65 items related to Autism Spectrum Disorder under the following domains: meaning, diagnosis, causes, sign and symptoms and management. The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics wherever required. **Results:** Majority of nurses, 54% had poor level of knowledge related to Autism spectrum disorder, 35% of nurses had average level of knowledge and only 8% of nurses had good level of knowledge about Autism spectrum disorder. **Conclusion:** findings of the study projected well the level of knowledge of nurses about the Autism Spectrum Disorder. Majority of nurses had poor knowledge regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Keywords: Knowledge; Nurses; Autism Spectrum Disorder.

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Introduction

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) are pervasive and lifelong neurodevelopmental disorders characterized by impaired socialization, impaired verbal and nonverbal communication, and restricted interests and repetitive patterns of behavior [1,2,3]. In the absence of national studies, the estimated rate for autism in India so far ranged between an impressionistic 1 in 500 to 1 in 150. The survey was conducted in 4,000 households in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Goa in collaboration with AIIMS, Thiruvananthapuram Medical College and universities of Stanford and Pennsylvania, US [4]. It has long been presumed that there is a common cause at the genetic, cognitive, and neural levels for autism's characteristic triad of symptoms [5].

Caring for children with childhood autism and other pervasive developmental disorders requires the services of professionals like psychiatrists, paediatricians, nurses, clinical psychologists among others [6].

The nurses' level of understanding of ASD can have a great impact on the prognosis of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This study is aimed at assessing knowledge of nurses about Autism spectrum Disorder.

Material and Method

Quantitative Non Experimental research approach was adopted for the study. Descriptive research design was used. Population was nursing personnel and sample size was 50 in number, selected through Non Probability convenience sampling technique. Setting was Yashwantrao Chavan Memorial

Hospital, Pune. Developed tool contained two sections: *Section A* consisted of demographic variables like age, gender, professional qualification, years of experience, training attended related to Autism Spectrum Disorder and exposure to Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Section B* consisted of self structures questionnaire of 65 items related to Autism Spectrum Disorder under the following domains: meaning, diagnosis, causes, sign and symptoms and management. It took 20mins to fill the questionnaire. The possible total maximum score was 65 and

minimum score was 0. After obtaining the permission from the concerned authority and informed consent from the samples, the investigator administered the tool. The data were analysed for the findings.

Result

Section-I: Description of samples according to Demographic characteristics by frequency and percentage is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of nurses as per their Demographic characteristics (N= 50)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (years)		
20-25	07	14
26-30	13	26
31-35	09	18
>35	21	42
Gender		
Male	01	02
Female	49	98
Qualification		
Diploma in Nursing	37	74
Graduation in Nursing	12	24
Post-Graduation in Nursing	01	02
Professional experience (Years)		
< 2	14	28
2.1 – 5	14	28
5.1 – 10	08	16
>10.1	14	28
Training attended related to Autism Spectrum Disorder		
Yes	05	10
No	45	90
Exposure to child with Autism Spectrum Disorder		
Yes	11	22
No	39	78

- Majority of nurses were found to be in more than 35years of category and least number was found in the 20-25years of category.
- 98% samples were female and only 2% are from the male category.
- Majority of nurses, 74% of them have done Diploma in nursing and only 2% fall in the post-graduation in nursing category.
- Except 5.1 -10 years of experience category, rest all three category have equal percentage of years of experiences.
- 90% of samples had not attended any training related to Autism Spectrum disorder; only 10% nurses had undergone the training.
- Majority of the samples, 78% had not exposure with the child with autism and only 22% had come across with a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Section II: Analysis of data related to the level of knowledge of nurses on Autism Spectrum disorder.

Table 2: Level of knowledge of nurses on Autism Spectrum Disorder (N=50)

Knowledge score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0-22 (Poor)	27	54
23-45 (Average)	19	38
46-65 (Good)	04	08

Fig. 1: Pie diagram shows the level of knowledge of Nurses on Autism spectrum disorder

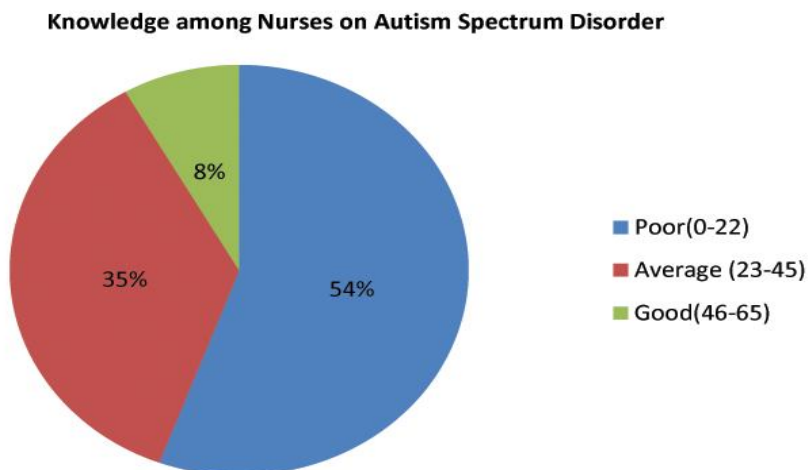


Table 2 and Fig 1 reveal that 54% of samples had poor level of knowledge related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, 35% of samples had average level of knowledge and only 8% of samples had good level of knowledge.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge level of nurses on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Results of this study indicated poor knowledge among the nurses regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder. These findings are consistent with the findings of study of Bakare et al [7]. They had noted that nurses working in tertiary health institutions in south-east and south- regions of Nigeria scored low on the knowledge about childhood autism among health workers (KCAHW). Knowledge gap was found to be higher in domain 3 (symptoms of obsessive and repeated pattern of behaviour), followed by domain 1 (symptoms of impairments in social interaction), domain 4 (type of disorder childhood autism is and associated co-morbidity) and domain 2 (symptoms of communication impairments).

Similar findings were observed by Strunk JA [8]. The Study showed that the school nurses are not adequately knowledgeable concerning communication skills, behavioural therapies and safety issues.

Study findings are consistent with findings of Monday N Igwe et al [9]. The total mean knowledge score was 12.56 ± 3.23 out of a total of 19 possible on the KCAHW questionnaire by the study group which

was low and a reflection of deficit in knowledge, education and awareness about childhood autism among the paediatric and psychiatric nurses.

Conclusion

Thus the findings of the study projected well the level of knowledge in nurses about the Autism Spectrum Disorder. Majority of nurses had poor knowledge regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder and they updated about ASD through workshops, seminars or conferences so that early diagnosis of children can be made.

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