

A Descriptive Study to Assess the Knowledge Regarding Forensic Nursing among Undergraduate Nursing Students in Selected Nursing Colleges

Kiran Prajapat¹, Kuldeep Meena¹, Mohan Yadav¹, Naresh Meena¹, Neetesh Kumar Jangam¹, Rajni Sharma²

¹UG Student, Symbiosis Institute of Nursing, Jaipur

²Guide Asst. Prof., Symbiosis Institute of Nursing, Jaipur

Corresponding Author:

Mrs. Rajni Sharma, (Guide) Asst. Prof., Symbiosis Institute of Nursing, Jaipur

E-mail:

rajnissharma1@gmail.com

Gfnpss-International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research is a journal of open access. In this journal, we allow all types of articles to be distributed freely and accessible under the terms of the creative common attribution- non-commercial-share. This allows the authors, readers and scholars and general public to read, use and to develop non-commercially work, as long as appropriate credit is given and the newly developed work are licensed with similar terms.

How to cite this article :

Abstract:

Background: Forensic nursing is a specialised area of nursing that combines healthcare knowledge with forensic science and legal principles. Nursing students need to understand the identification of medico-legal cases, documentation, preservation of evidence, and the responsibilities of nurses when caring for victims of violence, abuse, and other traumatic events.

Materials & Methods: A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research design is proposed. An illustrative sample of 100 undergraduate nursing students would be selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. Data would be collected using a structured knowledge questionnaire covering the concept of forensic nursing, medico-legal cases, documentation, evidence preservation, ethical responsibilities, and the role of nurses in forensic situations. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, would be used to analyse the findings.

Results: Actual survey data are not available. Illustrative results are provided to demonstrate the presentation of participants' characteristics and knowledge levels. The final manuscript should report the actual findings obtained from the selected nursing colleges.

Conclusion: Assessment of knowledge regarding forensic nursing may help identify educational needs and support the inclusion of forensic nursing concepts in undergraduate nursing education.

Keywords: Forensic nursing, nursing students, knowledge, medico-legal cases, forensic evidence, nursing education.

INTRODUCTION

Forensic nursing is a specialised field that integrates nursing science with forensic science and legal principles. It involves the provision of healthcare to individuals affected by violence, abuse, trauma, and other situations in which medical and legal concerns intersect. Forensic nursing also involves appropriate documentation, recognition of potential evidence, preservation of evidence, and collaboration with relevant professionals within the limits of nursing responsibilities.

Nurses may be among the first healthcare professionals to encounter individuals involved in medico-legal situations. These situations may include physical assault, sexual violence, domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, poisoning, suspicious injuries, and other circumstances requiring medical and legal assessment.

In such cases, the primary responsibility of nurses is to provide safe, compassionate, and appropriate patient care. At the same time, accurate documentation and careful handling of potential evidence may be important for subsequent legal proceedings. Nurses must understand the principles of informed consent, confidentiality, professional accountability, and applicable legal requirements.

Forensic nursing knowledge includes the recognition of medico-legal cases, systematic assessment, objective documentation, preservation of evidence, appropriate referral, and cooperation with authorised professionals. Inadequate knowledge may result in incomplete documentation, contamination or loss of evidence, or failure to follow institutional protocols.

Undergraduate nursing education provides an important opportunity to introduce students to these principles before

they enter professional practice. Studies involving nursing students have identified gaps in knowledge concerning forensic nursing procedures and evidence preservation, supporting the importance of appropriate educational preparation.

Therefore, the present study is proposed to assess the knowledge regarding forensic nursing among undergraduate nursing students in selected nursing colleges.

Nurses have an important role in caring for individuals involved in medico-legal situations. Their responsibilities may include providing emergency care, documenting injuries, maintaining confidentiality, recognising potential evidence, and following institutional procedures for referral and evidence preservation.

However, forensic nursing may receive limited attention in some undergraduate nursing curricula. Students may have insufficient exposure to the legal responsibilities of nurses, appropriate documentation, the chain of custody, and the importance of preserving potential forensic evidence.

Assessing knowledge among undergraduate nursing students can help identify areas that require greater educational attention. Such information may assist nursing educators in strengthening theoretical teaching, clinical orientation, and continuing professional development.

The present study focuses exclusively on knowledge assessment and does not evaluate the effectiveness of an educational intervention or the actual clinical performance of students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding forensic nursing among undergraduate nursing students in selected nursing colleges.
2. To assess knowledge regarding the identification and management of medico-legal cases.
3. To assess knowledge regarding documentation and preservation of forensic evidence.
4. To assess knowledge regarding the ethical and legal responsibilities of nurses in forensic situations.
5. To identify areas of inadequate knowledge regarding forensic nursing among undergraduate nursing students.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Undergraduate nursing students may have different levels of knowledge regarding forensic nursing.
2. Knowledge may vary according to year of study, previous educational exposure, and clinical experience.
3. A structured questionnaire can assess knowledge when its validity and reliability have been appropriately established.
4. Identifying knowledge gaps may help nursing educators strengthen forensic nursing education.

DELIMITATIONS

The study will be delimited to:

1. Undergraduate nursing students enrolled in selected nursing colleges.

2. Students who meet the inclusion criteria and provide informed consent.
3. Assessment of knowledge regarding forensic nursing only.
4. Data collected during the specified study period.

MATERIALS & METHODS

Research Approach

A quantitative research approach will be used to assess knowledge regarding forensic nursing among undergraduate nursing students.

Research Design

A descriptive cross-sectional research design will be adopted to assess the level of knowledge at a single point in time.

Research Setting

The study is proposed to be conducted in selected nursing colleges in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. The actual names of the institutions and the data collection period should be specified in the final manuscript.

Population

The target population will consist of undergraduate nursing students enrolled in the selected nursing colleges.

Sample Size

An illustrative sample size of 100 undergraduate nursing students is proposed.

The final sample size should be justified using an appropriate calculation based on the expected proportion of adequate knowledge, desired precision, confidence level, and anticipated non-response.

Sampling Technique

A non-probability purposive sampling technique is proposed, subject to institutional permission and the approved research protocol.

Inclusion Criteria

Students will be included if they:

1. Are enrolled in an undergraduate nursing programme.
2. Are studying in the selected nursing colleges.
3. Are willing to participate and provide informed consent.
4. Are available during the data collection period.
5. Can understand the questionnaire in the selected language.

Exclusion Criteria

Students may be excluded if they:

1. Are absent during the data collection period.
2. Are unable to complete the questionnaire.
3. Have already participated in the same study, where duplicate participation is possible.
4. Do not provide informed consent.

Research Instrument

Section A: Socio-demographic information

Section B: Knowledge questionnaire regarding forensic nursing

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire should be reviewed by experts in forensic nursing, medical-surgical nursing, psychiatric nursing, and research methodology.

A pilot study may be conducted among students who will not be included in the final sample. Reliability should be assessed using a suitable method for the questionnaire and its scoring format, such as KR-20 for dichotomously scored items where applicable.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission will be obtained from the selected nursing colleges and the appropriate ethics committee, where required. Eligible students will be informed about the purpose and procedure of the study.

Informed consent will be obtained before administering the questionnaire. Students will complete the questionnaire in an appropriate academic setting without guidance that could

influence their answers.

The completed questionnaires will be checked for completeness, coded, and entered into suitable statistical software for analysis.

Ethical Considerations

- Approval from the appropriate Institutional Ethics Committee
- Permission will be obtained from the participating nursing colleges.
- Participation will be voluntary and based on informed consent.
- Confidentiality and privacy will be maintained.
- Students will not face academic penalties for declining participation.
- Data will be used only for the approved research purpose.

RESULTS

Table 1. Distribution of Students According to Socio-demographic Variables (N = 100)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–20 years	35	35
	21–23 years	50	50
	Above 23 years	15	15
Year of study	First/Second year	55	55
	Third/Fourth year	45	45
Previous forensic nursing education	Yes	30	30
	No	70	70
Previous clinical exposure to medico-legal cases	Yes	25	25
	No	75	75
Total		100	100

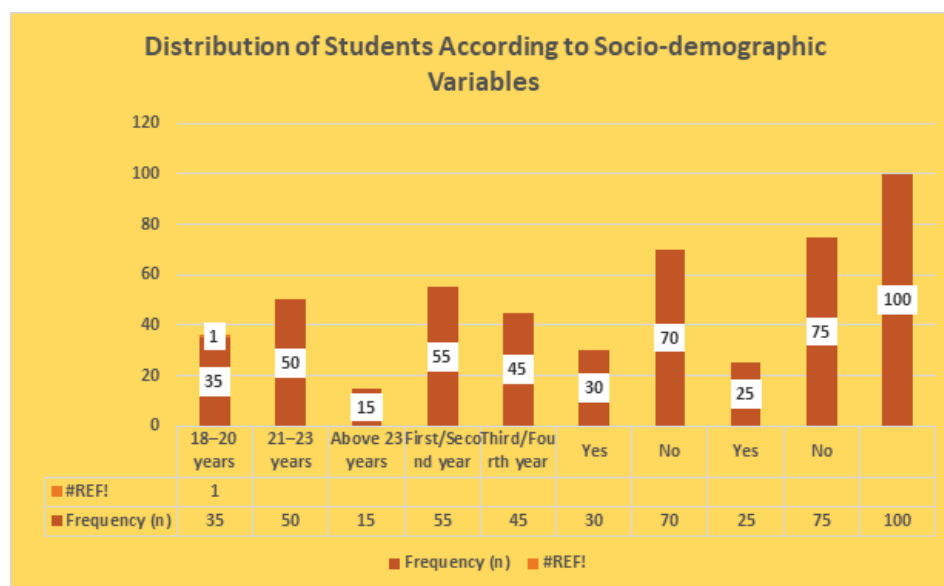


Fig. 01 : Distribution of Students According to Socio-demographic Variables

Table 2. Distribution of Students According to Overall Knowledge Level Regarding Forensic Nursing (N = 100)

Knowledge level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Inadequate	30	30
Moderately adequate	45	45
Adequate	25	25
Total	100	100

Table 3. Item-wise Knowledge Regarding Forensic Nursing

Knowledge area	Correct responses (n)	Percentage (%)
Meaning and scope of forensic nursing	70	70
Identification of medico-legal cases	62	62
Importance of accurate documentation	68	68
Recognition of potential forensic evidence	55	55
Principles of evidence preservation	48	48
Understanding of chain of custody	42	42
Confidentiality and informed consent	65	65
Legal and professional responsibilities	58	58

Summary of Results

The results demonstrate how socio-demographic characteristics, overall knowledge levels, and item-wise knowledge can be presented in a descriptive study. Actual survey data are required to determine the knowledge level of undergraduate nursing students in the selected colleges.

DISCUSSION

The present study aims to assess knowledge regarding forensic nursing among undergraduate nursing students. Knowledge of forensic nursing is important because nurses may encounter patients whose injuries or circumstances have medico-legal implications.

In the results, 45% of students were classified as having moderately adequate knowledge, 30% had inadequate knowledge, and 25% had adequate knowledge. These hypothetical values demonstrate a reporting format only and should not be interpreted as actual findings from the selected nursing colleges.

The item-wise illustrative results suggest how knowledge gaps concerning chain of custody, evidence preservation, and medico-legal documentation could be identified. In actual practice, nurses must follow applicable laws, institutional protocols, and authorised procedures when handling potential evidence.

NURSING IMPLICATIONS

Nursing Practice

The study may help identify areas where students require stronger understanding of medico-legal documentation, evidence preservation, patient rights, and professional responsibilities.

Nursing Education

Nursing educators may use the findings to strengthen teaching related to forensic nursing, medico-legal cases,

documentation, confidentiality, and chain-of-custody principles.

Nursing Administration

Nursing administrators may consider periodic educational sessions and access to institutional protocols related to medico-legal cases.

Nursing Research

Further research may assess forensic nursing knowledge across different nursing programmes and educational settings. Separate intervention studies may evaluate the effectiveness of structured teaching or simulation-based learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct similar studies among nursing students in a larger number of colleges.
2. Include students from different years of undergraduate nursing education.
3. Develop and validate a structured knowledge questionnaire for forensic nursing.
4. Strengthen undergraduate education regarding medico-legal cases, documentation, and evidence preservation.
5. Conduct future studies to evaluate the effectiveness of educational interventions and simulation-based training.

CONCLUSION

Forensic nursing is an important area of nursing practice that integrates healthcare, forensic science, and legal responsibilities. Undergraduate nursing students should understand the recognition of medico-legal cases, accurate documentation, preservation of potential evidence, patient rights, confidentiality, and professional accountability.

The proposed study provides a framework for assessing knowledge regarding forensic nursing among undergraduate nursing students in selected nursing colleges. Actual findings may help identify areas of inadequate knowledge and guide improvements in nursing education.

REFERENCES

1. Chander P, Mathew B, Choudhary P, et al. Effectiveness of structured health education program on knowledge regarding forensic nursing among B.Sc. (Hons.) Nursing third- and fourth-year students of the College of Nursing, AIIMS Raipur. *J Family Med Prim Care*. 2025;14(1):317-321. doi:10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_1157_23.
2. Machado BP, Araújo IMB, Figueiredo MCB. Forensic nursing practice—What do the students know anyway? *Forensic Sci Int Synerg*. 2020;2:138-143. doi:10.1016/j.fsisyn.2020.04.003.
3. Abou Hashish EA. Knowledge and attitude of university nursing students towards forensic nursing and their influencing factors: a mixed-methods study. *Egypt J Forensic Sci*. 2024;14:31. doi:10.1186/s41935-024-00404-2.
4. Knowledge Questionnaire over Forensics Nursing Practices: research on the assessment of forensic nursing knowledge among nursing students. *Procedia Soc Behav Sci*. 2016.
5. Knowledge of forensic nursing practices: efficacy of an intervention for nursing students. *J Forensic Nurs*. 2020.
6. Lynch VA, Duval JB. *Forensic Nursing Science*. 2nd ed. St Louis: Elsevier Mosby; 2011.
7. Hammer RM, Moynihan B, Pagliaro EM. *Forensic Nursing: A Handbook for Practice*. 2nd ed. Burlington (MA): Jones & Bartlett Learning; 2013.
8. International Association of Forensic Nurses. *Forensic nursing scope and standards of practice*. International Association of Forensic Nurses.
9. World Health Organization. *Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2003.
10. World Health Organization. *Responding to intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women: WHO clinical and policy guidelines*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2013.
11. World Health Organization. *Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: a clinical handbook*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2014.

