



KNOWLEDGE OF NURSING STUDENTS REGARDING HUMAN RIGHTS OF MENTALLY ILL

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Introduction:

The United Nations has defined Human Rights as “those rights which are inherent in our nature and without which we cannot live as human beings”¹. People with mental disorders are particularly vulnerable to abuse and violation of their rights. If a protective mechanism is not in place, they are susceptible to abuse by society, which includes family members, caregivers, professionals, friends, fellow citizen etc². Human rights are also connected to mental health in two distinct ways as mental health policy affects human rights and human rights violations affects mental health. Therefore positive promotion of mental health and human rights improves the quality of life and mutually reinforce one on other

Human rights are basic rights without which no one can survive. Since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights emphasises that everyone has equal rights irrespective of caste, race, nationality or status. It is clear that mentally ill individuals also has rights like other individuals. Despite the monitoring of all mental health institutions by National Human Rights Commission, incidences of violation of human rights are being reported. The researcher believes that if nurses are aware of human rights of mentally ill they can safeguard the human rights. With this intention the study was conducted to assess the knowledge of B.Sc. Nursing students regarding human rights of the mentally ill in selected nursing colleges of Bangalore area.

Objectives:

1. To assess the level of knowledge among nursing students regarding human rights of mentally ill.
2. To compare the knowledge of nursing students in different level of studies.
3. To determine the association between certain baseline variables and knowledge of nursing students regarding protection of human rights of mentally ill.

Method: A descriptive survey approach was used for the study. Two-stage random sampling technique was used to the 400 nursing students from nursing colleges of Bangalore South East area.

Results: In overall knowledge score obtained by students, none had good level, 30.25% of students had adequate knowledge and 69.75% of students had inadequate knowledge. There was significant association between knowledge score with gender ($p<0.05$), previous awareness about human rights of mentally ill ($p<0.01$), exposure to psychiatric/ mental health setup ($p<0.05$), having an acquaintances with mental illness ($p<0.001$) and experience with human rights commission cell ($p<0.05$). There was no significant association between knowledge score and age, year of the course and marital status.

Conclusion: The findings revealed that none of the B.Sc. (N) students had good level of Knowledge and majority (69.75%) had inadequate knowledge. With 30.25% having adequate knowledge and none of them had good level of knowledge. This inadequacy of the knowledge level may be corrected by giving importance to the human rights topic in nursing curriculum to safeguard the human rights of mentally ill.

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