



**A STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF PATIENTS
AND THEIR RELATIVES TOWARDS ELECTRO-CONVULSIVE THERAPY
AT MENTAL HOSPITAL AT UJJAIN, M.P.**

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Introduction

Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT) has been effective in various psychiatric disorders and is life-saving in some conditions. Despite its effectiveness and lack of serious side-effects, its use is restricted due to negative attitude of patients and their relatives towards ECT. Although electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is an effective, safe and widely practiced treatment, it has also been one of most controversial and misunderstood procedures.

It is regarded as a treatment reserved for cases who do not respond to pharmacotherapy although a number of studies have shown it to be equally efficacious as that of pharmacotherapy. The attitude and knowledge of patients and their relatives has been studied in a number of studies to know the reasons behind its under-utilization. In majority of these studies, the questionnaire was formulated by clinicians taking into account the regional and cultural trends. There has been lot of debate on the fact that very few patients and their family members really understood the facts related to ECT. Many studies have been done so far to know about the attitude and knowledge regarding ECT. The objective of the study was to study the attitude of patients and their attendants towards ECT. Also, we studied their knowledge regarding ECT prior to the administration of ECT.

Method

A 16 item questionnaire was formulated to be used for assessing the attitude and knowledge about ECT and tool used was in Hindi language for better understanding. Patients planned for ECT were administered the questionnaire after taking consent. A total of 60 patients and 60 attendants were taken up for the study.

Results

About 63-69% of patients gave correct (right) responses to questions like ECT being life-saving procedure, need of investigations before ECT and other questions like question numbers 1,6,7,11,14,15. There was little knowledge regarding other areas like use of ECT in pregnant females and elderly (question numbers 3, 5, 10, 12). The patients as well as their attendants did not differ significantly in the responses given to the queries. Maximum number of patients received knowledge regarding ECT from doctors; few had attained it from other sources like internet. Regarding life-saving effects of ECT, majority (82%) patients agreed to it and the rest were uncertain showing that majority of patients were of the opinion that ECT is helpful in some emergency conditions where drugs don't help much. When asked about temporary impairment in memory after ECT, 80% patients agreed to memory impairment of retrograde type after the procedure. When we asked our patients about the source of information regarding ECT, maximum (68%) said they received it from doctors; few (14%) got it from internet and the rest from other sources. Patients were asked about use of anesthetic medications in the procedure; 60% agreed to their use. When asked if the chances of death in the procedure were very high; 55% patients disagreed and said that the chances of death due to the procedure were very less.

Conclusion

The study is a preliminary one and emphasizes the need for better standardized questionnaire for proper assessment. It also gives us an insight into lack of knowledge among patients and their attendants regarding ECT.

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