

# KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES REGARDING CARE OF GERIATRIC PATIENTS AMONG NURSES IN PESHAWAR, KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Amjad Ali<sup>1</sup>, Muhammad Idrees Khan<sup>2</sup>, Sardar Ali<sup>1</sup>, Dildar Muhammad<sup>1</sup>, Naeema<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Nursing Khyber Medical University, Peshawar - Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Khyber Medical University, Peshawar - Pakistan

## ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** To assess the knowledge and attitude about care of elderly patients among nurses working in public sector hospitals in Peshawar.

**Materials & Methods:** A descriptive cross sectional study on nurses caring old age patients was conducted at Hayatabad Medical Complex, Lady Reading Hospital, and Khyber Teaching Hospital, Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The total period of the research work was 6 months. Generally, 282 nurses were included in the research using simple random sample method. Information was collected using an adopted, validated questionnaire.

**Results:** Overall, 282 nurses included in the study. More than half (56%) participants were female and 54% participants were from age group less than 30 years. The nurses working in different units of three tertiary care hospitals had average knowledge (60.6%) regarding the care of old age patients. They possess favorable attitude towards the care of old age patients.

**Conclusion:** Nurses working in three tertiary care government hospitals had overall average knowledge regarding the care of old age patients and they possess favorable attitude towards the care of old age patients.

**Key Words:** Nurses, Geriatric, Knowledge, Attitude, Tertiary Care Hospitals, Nursing Care.

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## INTRODUCTION

Advancing in age is a vital part of the complete human societies multiplying biologic and physiologic variations that marks in disintegration of biological actions in aged people identified as the elderly field of life. This domain usually starts after fourth decade and continues till deaths. During this time human being changes physically and physiologically<sup>1</sup>. Geriatrics refers to the field of medicine which focuses on the health and care of old age people. This care usually based on prevention of diseases, caring of diseases, rehabilitation and disability in older people<sup>2</sup>. The proportion of older population is getting rise with time due to the decline in mortality rate of different diseases. This decline is due to the good survival rate of the population with sustainable prevention of different disease and good care. Worldwide; there are approximately 650 million people live with age 60 years and above<sup>3,4</sup>.

With the passage of time and with effective measure the number of older age increases. There is one out of ten persons more than 60 years of age. If this ratio continues, the number is expected to be one out of five people and so on one out of three people in 2051<sup>5</sup>. As the people become aged, the disease pattern as compared to young people totally changed. Studies revealed that the most common health related problem linked with age is pain in legs and joints reported in 43.4% people<sup>7</sup> dental and chewing problems was reported in 42% people followed by decrease visual acuity (57%), hearing loss (15.4%), hypertension (14%), diarrhea and dermatological disorders (12%), cardiac diseases (9%), diabetes mellitus (8.1%), asthma (6%) and urological complication (5.6%)<sup>8</sup> Limited physical activity cause many health related problems in old age people, also the body immune system become weak which may also leads to many disease<sup>9</sup> Majority of the diseases in geriatric patients are due to the change in life style, emotional impact, social circumstances, nutrition and psychosocial health<sup>10,11</sup>.

In older age all the people need help in maintain their living state healthy. The only way to prolong the life expectancy is to care in the last decade of life. The care may in the form of prevention, treatment, life style changes, exercise, nutrition and emotionally or psycho-

## Correspondence

**Dr. Amjad Ali**

Institute of Nursing Khyber Medical University,  
Peshawar - Pakistan.

**Email:** amjadshayan111@gmail.com

**Cell:** +92-345-2265162

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logical support<sup>12</sup>. The continue care of people are met in different places. Some people are provided old age care in their home; many people received old age care in residential settings, also some people get the care in hospitals<sup>11,12</sup>. Majority of people receive the old age care in old age houses and nursing homes the trends of family are changes in the new era. Now a day's people are preferring nuclear families that's why the families become smaller and the burden of old age people are increasing on different nursing homes and hospitals<sup>13</sup>. Nurses associate a leading part in provision of health care and prevention of diseases, they deliver health services to all communities, disables, and ill patients as well as elderly sick people, hence, they require to be provided an appropriate training for adult old caring. It is investigated that negative attitude of nurses towards the patient and lack of knowledge might interrupt hopes of elderly individuals and impact provision geriatric nursing care<sup>14</sup>. The quality of care is not possible without good knowledge and positive practices. Providing holistic and quality care, the nurses should have adequate knowledge regarding the geriatric and they should have positive attitude towards the geriatric. Positive attitude always leads to positive outcome in health care system and the positive attitudes have positive impact on the care of geriatric patients<sup>15</sup>. Significantly, it has been reported in the last 30 years, health professional specifically nurses have misinterpreted perceptions about elderly patients and that nurses inclined to have insignificant attention to care for old people and they favored to care for pediatric and adult patients. Majority of the nurses have shown their interest to care for elderly patients has decreased<sup>16</sup>. The field of Gerontology may be used as a channel of nursing training in the while caring the old age patients<sup>17</sup>. The nurse's knowledge and attitude regarding the care of old age people is very necessary. This study was designed to evaluate the knowledge and attitude of the nurses towards the care of aged people.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive analytical study was conducted in three governments tertiary care hospital of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study was carried out in LRH Medical Teaching Institute (MTI), KTH and HMC Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. All these three hospitals are government tertiary care hospitals located at the center of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All these hospitals cover 80% of population of the KPK province and consider a hub for all the government sectors hospitals. Participants who fulfilled the inclusion criteria have been selected from different departments of these hospitals. The participants were taken through Simple Random Sampling technique for current study. There was enough nursing staff working in these three hospitals that were easily accessed through Simple Random Sampling. Initially the list of nursing staff working in all these three hospitals was collected. After that 288 nursing staff fulfills the inclusion criteria were se-

lected through lottery method from different units of hospitals. Inclusion criteria, nurses, they had been performing duty in different wards for more than six months and giving direct care to the adult aged patients. Exclusion criteria, staff nurses they had not been providing nursing care directly to geriatric patients and had less experience than six month. The research topic was approved by the graduate committee of INS, KMU. After graduate committee the study was approved by Khyber Medical University's Advance Study Research Board (ASRB) committee. Ethical clearance was granted from Ethics Review board of the KMU, Peshawar. Permission was granted from nursing directors of LRH, KTH and HMC before data collection.

Consent forms were signed from all the participants before filling the questionnaire. The participants were assured that the findings of the study will never affect the job of participants, also there will be no benefit or harm in participating in the study. The data were collected using adopted questionnaire. The validity and reliability was checked by (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87) in adopted questionnaire. The questionnaire is consisting of three sections. Section "A" covered demographic data. The second section "B" was consisted of 25 questions based on knowledge of nurses regarding caring Geriatric Patients. The knowledge section of questionnaire consists of 25 questions and each correct answer will be given one mark. The knowledge of the participants will be categorized as:

- Excellent Knowledge: Greater than 80%
- Good knowledge: 70 -80%
- Average Knowledge: 60-70%
- Poor knowledge: Less than 50%.

In section "C" there were 14 questions regarding the attitude of the nursing caring geriatric patients. For analysis of data SPSS (version 24) was used. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for all categorical variables including variables regarding knowledge and practices of nursing staff caring geriatric patients.

## RESULTS

Overall included participants in this study were 288 in which six participants quit to take part in the study. All the participants were nursing staff caring old age people working in different units of LRH, KTH and HMC Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The mean age of the participants is 31.41 years. The participants were asked regarding the qualification and it was found that around half (50%) of the participants were having FA/F.Sc qualification, followed by graduation 25%, matric and master 11.7% respectively. 29% participants were working in medical unit followed by 27% in surgical unit, 25.5% emergency and 18.4% in intensive care unit. Less than half (45.7%) nursing staff had diploma in nursing. Similarly, 35.8% had BS in Nursing, 15.6% has post RN and only 2.8% participants had master

in nursing. Majority (81%) nursing staff has 2-5 years' experience while 18.8% had less than 2 years' experience, shown in the results. Majority (171) of nursing staff caring old age patients had average knowledge, followed by 29.8% of nursing staff have poor knowledge and 8.5%

nursing staff have good knowledge. Only 1.1% nurses had excellent knowledge regarding the care of geriatric patients (Table 2). More than half (51.8%) participants had favorable attitude, 17.7% participants had neutral attitude while 30.5% participants had unfavorable attitude (Table 7).

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of the study population, (N=282).**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age of the Participants	< than 30 years	152	53.9	53.9	53.9
	30-40 years	118	41.8	41.8	95.7
	41-50 years	10	3.5	3.5	99.3
	> than 50 years	2	0.7	0.7	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	
Gender of Participants	Male	124	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Female	158	56.0	56.0	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	
Qualification of the Participants	Matric	33	11.7	11.7	11.7
	F.Sc / FA	143	50.7	50.7	62.4
	Graduation	73	25.9	25.9	88.3
	Master	33	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	
Working Unit of the Participants	Medical	82	29.1	29.1	29.1
	Surgical Ward	76	27.0	27.0	56.0
	ICU/CU	52	18.4	18.4	74.5
	Emergency	72	25.5	25.5	100.0
	Total	282	100.0	100.0	
Professional Qualification of the Participants	Diploma in Nursing	129	45.7	45.7	45.7
	BSN	101	35.8	35.8	81.6
	Post RN	44	15.6	15.6	97.2
	MSN	8	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	282	100	100.0	
Professional Experience of the Participants	< than 1 year	53	18	18.8	18.8
	2 - 5 years	229	81	81.2	100.0
	Total	282	100	100.0	

**Table 2: Knowledge of Nurses regarding care of Geriatric Patients (N=282).**

Level of Knowledge	Number	Percentage
Poor Knowledge	84	29.8%
Average Knowledge	171	60.6%
Good Knowledge	24	8.5%
Excellent Knowledge	3	1.1%

**Table 3: Knowledge of Nurses regarding care of Geriatric Patients (N=282).**

Level of Attitude	Number	Percentage
Unfavorable Attitude	86	30.5%
Neutral Attitude	50	17.7%
Favorable Attitude	146	51.8%

## DISCUSSION

In the current study majority of the nurses were female while majority of the participants were from the age group 30 – 40 years old. Half of the participants had FA/F. Sc. Similarly, majority of the participants were working medical and surgical units. More than half of the participants were from rural area. In the same context a study conducted in India, 77% study participants were from age group 19- 23 years old, 95% participants were female. 54% participants were from urban area<sup>18</sup>. Likewise, one other study also estimate majority of the participants were female, while their means age was 31 years. In Pakistan 66% population resides in rural area, health care professional like nurses mostly engage in nursing field from the rural areas<sup>19</sup>. On average the female nurses are

more in health department as compared to male nurses. The trend of nursing is much more prevalent in females. The ratio of male to female nurses is 1:19<sup>20,21</sup>. The current study revealed that more than half (60%) nurse had average knowledge regarding the care of old age patient. However, in other study conducted in India regarding the knowledge of nurses about the old age care. The knowledge score of the participants regarding the care of old age people has been reported 45.37%<sup>22</sup>. A study conducted in Greece identified lack of knowledge of nurses regarding the care of old age patients. The mean score of nurses knowledge was identified as 57%<sup>23</sup>. In the same context, a study conducted on Greek nurses to identify the knowledge of nurses regarding the care of old age people revealed that the nurses had good knowledge regarding the care of old age people, also the study showed positive attitude of nurses towards the care of old age people<sup>24</sup>. Addition to the knowledge, in the current study more than half of the participants responded that old age people needs physical, biological, physiological, functional, and psychological assessment. 69% nurses reported that psychosocial and functional assessment is the key assessment for assessing geriatric patients<sup>25</sup>. The nurses were asked regarding the reduction of unfamiliar environmental anxiety of elderly patients. In the current study majority of study participants responded that anxiety of the old age people regarding hospital environment could be reduced by orienting them with the hospital and explain all the diagnostic procedures and their relatives. Likewise, a study reported that 95% nurses respond that anxiety due to hospital in old age people can be reduced by maintaining a calm, unhurried, confident manner while interacting with client<sup>26</sup>. The literature also support that orientation to the environment, social support, support from the health care provider, and unhurried can reduce the hospital related anxiety in old age patients<sup>27-28</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the nurses had average knowledge regarding the care of old age patients in terms of nutrition requirement, blood pressure monitoring, hydration management, anxiety control, urination and sleep pattern monitoring. In addition, the nurses had favorable attitude towards the care of old age patients.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Area of improvement in Nurse's education has been identified. There is need to improve nurse's knowledge regarding care of geriatric patients. There is need of proper strategies to improve the nurse's knowledge regarding and attitude towards the care of old age patients

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#### AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

Following authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript as under

**Ali A:** Study conception and design and manuscript writing.

**Khan MI:** Contributed to the concept of questionnaire and helping data.

**Ali S:** Data interpretation and overall supervision.

**Muhammad D:** Critical review of the manuscript.

**Naeema:** Data analysis and final draft Proof reading.

Authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.