



## Attitude and Practice of Nurses Towards the use of Nursing Assessment Format

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Greentree Group

Received: 24.10.2016

Edited : 29.11.2016

Accepted: 27.12.2016

Published: 15.01.2017



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## ABSTRACT

A descriptive correlative study was conducted to identify the attitude and practice of staff nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format. Based on sample selection criteria purposive sampling was used to select 45 staff nurses from the wards of Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore. A semantic differential scale on attitude and check list on practice was developed and used to collect the data. The validity of the tool was established by the subject experts from related field. Reliability of the tool was tested by test-retest method for attitude scale and inter-rater method for practice checklist and tool was found reliable. Data was analyzed using SPSS-11.5 version. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The analysis revealed that the attitude of nurses on various aspects of nursing assessment format, content of the format  $M=34.73$  ( $SD=3.87$ ), applicability  $M=26.11$  ( $SD=5.24$ ), significance  $M=33.13$  ( $SD=6.33$ ) and contribution to patient prognosis  $M=16.09$  ( $SD=3.93$ ) were favorable. The overall attitude of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format was favorable with mean score of 110.067 ( $SD=16.35$ ). The obtained mean practice score was  $M=13.33$  ( $SD=2.13$ ) which showed moderate practice. The obtained coefficient of correlation  $r = 0.328$  ( $p=0.028$ ) was significant therefore, the attitude towards nursing assessment format was significantly correlated to practice. The 't' value obtained with respect to area of working  $t=5.357$  ( $p=0.000$ ) was highly significant and was independently associated with attitude towards nursing assessment format. The obtained 't' values regarding education  $t=2.341$  ( $p=0.025$ ) was significantly associated with the practice of nurses towards nursing assessment format. The present study reveals that the nurses had positive attitude and good practice towards Nursing Assessment Format. Assessment format has important role in rendering quality care. Therefore, the nurse educators must frequently assess the nurses' skill in doing the assessment and proper guidance should be given to them for better patient care.

## KEYWORDS

*Attitude, Practice, Nursing Assessment Format*

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## INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a healthcare profession focused on the care of individuals, families, and communities so they may attain, maintain, or recover optimal health and quality of life from birth to the end of life. It includes the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people<sup>1-2</sup>.

Historically, nurses are proud about themselves of comforting those who are ill

and of executing with precision such tasks as dressing wound, administering medication etc. Those nurses focused on treating specific diseases and implementing physician's instructions. Now health care delivery system has changed and nursing has changed with it. Nurses now work with well and ill client. As the practice of nursing became more complex, nurses began to study the process of nursing both



to understand and to improve the means nurses use to accomplish their goal<sup>4</sup>.

One of the important aspects of nursing process is nursing assessment, which includes gathering of information about a patient's physiological, psychological, sociological, and spiritual status. The focus and type of data collected during such assessment is central to the effectiveness of the diagnostic process and subsequent planned nursing interventions. Accurate assessment is crucial to ensure client needs are properly identified and the right course of action is implemented<sup>5</sup>.

The nurse makes clinical observation of a client, reports the client's situation relative to a medical problem, and then follows delegated medical activities prescribed by the physician. In the independent role of a health care provider, the nurse assesses the client's response to health problems and institute nursing interventions to maintain or improve the client's health<sup>5</sup>.

The challenge for many institutions is to help professional nursing staff to refine their understanding of nursing process and documentation of skills to identify problems and propose appropriate care plans.

## NEED FOR THE STUDY

The Nursing process is a patient centred, goal oriented method of caring that

provides a framework to nursing care. Hall in 1955 was the first to use Nursing process to describe the independent role of nurses in caring for clients. In 1961, the nursing process was defined at the Catholic University of America. It was developed as a template for thinking that was exclusively for nursing<sup>6</sup>.

The nursing process was designed for registered nurses in mind. Use of the nursing process provides a common way of thinking for all licensed nurses. It involves five major steps of assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, implementation / intervention and evaluation<sup>6</sup>.

Assessment strategies in nursing have been influenced by the problem-solving framework of the nursing process and nursing models. Assessment of need is integral to the care process and has received much attention in relation to the establishment of eligibility criteria for long-term care. The joint commission on Accreditation of Health Care Organization (2001) requires that each patient have an initial assessment consisting of a history and physical examination performed and documented within 24 hours of admission as an inpatient<sup>7</sup>.

The effectiveness of nursing assessment is focused up on the type of data collected. A study conducted by Iyer (1992) states that inaccurate and inappropriate data



collection accounted for one of the major sources of errors in the diagnostic process as accuracy is vital for appropriate and meaningful nursing care<sup>9</sup>.

According to Alfaro (1990), the method of data collection is influenced by the assessment format. Therefore the assessment format is fundamentally important as the prompts it provides, guide and influence the data collection efforts and the findings. As nursing assessment formats provide the cues for data collection, commonly used formats may be a contributory factor for nurse's diagnostic limitations<sup>9</sup>.

Nurses often work in settings where standardized assessment forms are available. These forms are designed to provide an accountability of the nursing profession to the public. Use of these forms ensures a comprehensive level of assessment<sup>10</sup>.

Many of the studies suggest that nurses lack interest and skill in doing the nursing assessment. The study conducted by Secret J.A(2005) to investigate physical assessment skills taught in undergraduate baccalaureate nursing programs and the physical assessment skills used by practicing nurses shows that of all the skills taught by the educators, 92.5% of the skills were practiced in class and 7.5% were taught but not practiced. For the

practicing nurses, 37% of the skill were never used, 29% were used on a daily/weekly basis, with 34% used on a monthly basis<sup>11</sup>.

Recently a Nursing Assessment Format is introduced in Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore in the month of October 2008. Since nursing assessment is the backbone of nursing care, it is important to assess how nurses are practicing the nursing assessment and their attitude towards nursing assessment format which they are following. Most of the hospitals in India use nursing process since it is a requirement for accreditation. Understanding the nurse's attitude is important to continued development in this area since most of the hospitals in India are not giving importance to nursing assessment. There are very few studies on nurse's attitude and practice towards nursing assessment format in India. Hence the researcher found the need for further research in this area. The findings of the study may help the nursing profession to improve the quality of nursing care that is provided to the mankind.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“A study to assess the attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of nursing



assessment format at Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore.”

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To describe the attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of Nursing Assessment Format.
2. To correlate the attitude and practice of nurses regarding the use of Nursing Assessment Format.
3. To associate the attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of Nursing Assessment format with their selected background variables.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive co-relational approach was adopted by the investigator for the present study. The present study was conducted at the wards of Apollo BGS Hospital, Mysore. The sample for the present study consisted of 45 nurses who were selected by purposive sampling technique.

A semantic differential scale was used to measure the attitude and check list to measure practice of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format.

### Description of the tool

The structured tool consisted of the following sections.

#### *Section-A: Background Variables*

It consisted of 6 items such as age, gender, education, experience, in-service educations attended and area of working.

#### *Section-B: Semantic Differential Scale on attitude*

A semantic differential scale was developed to assess the attitude of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format. The structured attitude questionnaire included 20 items. The subjects were asked to identify the number on the scale which they feel most accurately describes their attitude. The responses given in a seven point scale such as 1 = fully unfavourable, 2 = unfavourable, 3 = partially unfavourable, 4 = indifferent, 5 = partially favourable, 6 = favourable and 7 = fully favourable. The high score indicates good attitude. The maximum total score was ‘140’.

#### *Section-C: Check list on practice:*

A check list on practice of nursing assessment format was prepared, which consisted of eighteen (18) items. The investigator identified the practice after verifying the Nursing assessment format filled by the participants. The responses include “Yes” or “No” and a score of one (1) had been given to “Yes” answers and zero (0) to “No” answers. The maximum total score was ‘18’.



## CONTENT VALIDITY

The structured questionnaire was submitted to 7 experts from the field of nursing. They were requested to give their opinion and suggestions regarding the items in the tool.

## RELIABILITY OF THE TOOL

Test - Retest method was used to test reliability of the semantic differential scale and inter-rater method was used for the practice check list. The reliability coefficient for attitude questionnaire was found to be  $r = 0.81$ . Hence the semantic scale was considered to be reliable. The practice checklist was scored by two people at a time. The reliability coefficient for practice questionnaire was found to be  $r = 0.98$ , which too was considered reliable.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was planned using descriptive and inferential statistics.

- Background variables of nurses were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution.
- Attitude and practice was analyzed using mean, standard deviation and range.
- Correlation between attitude and practice was analyzed using co-efficient of correlation.
- Association between attitude, practice and background variables of nurses were analyzed using linear regression.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Section-1: Data on background variables of staff nurses

Majority of the participants (75.6%) belonged to the age group of 21-25 years, (53.3%) were females, (95.6%) had completed GNM, (66.7%) had 1-3 years of experience, (95.6%) had attended in-service education on nursing process and (64.4%) were working in medical surgical department.

### Section 2 - Data on attitude and practice towards the use of nursing assessment format

Attitude towards nursing assessment format was evaluated under the headings like the content of format, its applicability, significance and contribution to patient prognosis. The obtained mean value for the content of the format was  $M=34.73$  ( $SD=3.87$ ), applicability  $M=26.11$  ( $SD=5.24$ ), significance  $M=33.13$  ( $SD=6.33$ ) and contribution to patient prognosis  $M=16.09$  ( $SD=3.93$ ).

The obtained mean attitude score was  $M=110.07$  ( $SD=16.35$ ) and range was 67. The obtained mean practice score was  $M=13.33$  ( $SD=2.13$ ) and range 8.

It was inferred that the attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format was high.

### Section 3 - Data on correlation between attitude and practice of staff nurses



### **regarding nursing admission assessment format**

The obtained coefficient of correlation  $r = 0.328$  ( $p=0.028$ ) was positive and significant. Therefore it was inferred that as the attitude towards nursing assessment format increased, the practice also increased.

### **Section 5 - Data on association between attitude of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format and their selected background factors.**

The obtained 't' value regarding area of working  $t=5.357$  ( $p=0.000$ ) was highly significant and was independently associated with attitude regarding nursing assessment format. The obtained t values regarding age  $t = 1.316$  ( $p=0.196$ ), gender  $t=.206$  ( $p=0.838$ ), education  $t = .012$  ( $p = .991$ ), experience  $t=1.974$  ( $p=.056$ ) and in-service education attended on nursing process  $t=.881$  ( $p=.384$ ) were not associated with the attitude of nurses towards nursing assessment format. It was inferred that the area of working had independent association with the attitude of nurses towards nursing assessment format.

### **Section 5- Data on association between practice regarding Nursing assessment format and the selected background Variables of nurses.**

The obtained t values regarding education  $t=2.341$  ( $p=0.025$ ) was significantly associated with the practice of nurses towards nursing assessment format. The age  $t = 1.738$  ( $p=0.090$ ), gender  $t=-1.816$  ( $p=0.077$ ), experience  $t=-1.865$  ( $p=0.070$ ), in-service education attended  $t=-1.174$  ( $p=0.248$ ) and area of working  $t= 1.547$  ( $p= .130$ ) were not associated with practice among nurses. It was inferred that the education had significant influence on practice of nursing assessment format.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Finding 1: Attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format.**

From the results it was inferred that the nurses were favourable towards nursing assessment format related to content area of the format, applicability, significance, and contribution to patient prognosis. Overall the attitude of nurses was good towards nursing assessment format.

This finding is consistent with the findings of previous study, conducted on nurses attitude and beliefs in pain assessment and management. The results showed that majority (96%) had positive attitude towards pain assessment tools.<sup>19</sup>

Regarding practice, there was good practice among nurses towards nursing assessment format.  $M=13.33$  ( $SD=2.13$ ).



In a study conducted in male surgical ward, Lampang Regional Hospital to assess the utilization of nursing process and also promoting factors and barriers to utilization of nursing process revealed that the nursing process was partially utilized.<sup>15</sup>

**Finding 2: Correlation between the attitude and practice of nurses regarding the use of Nursing Assessment Format.**

There was a significant positive correlation between attitude and practice of nurses regarding nursing assessment format.

In a study conducted on application of nursing process in the hospital and communitarian practice in institutions, a positive and significant correlation found between knowledge and attitude.<sup>13</sup>

**Finding 3: Association of attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of Nursing Assessment format with their selected background variables.**

The area of working was independently associated with the attitude of nurses regarding nursing assessment format 't'=5.35(p=0.00) and education was independently associated with practice of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format 't'=2.34(p=0.02).

In a similar study conducted to evaluate nurses attitude and beliefs in pain assessment and management revealed that

education had a positive impact on the use and outcome of the pain assessment tool.<sup>19</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The following conclusions have been drawn keeping in mind the findings of the present study.

- The analysis of demographic characteristics reveals that majority 75.6% of the nurses were between the age group 21-25 years; 53.3% were females. 95.6% of them were GNM. 66.7% of participants had 1-3 years of experience and majority 95.6% had attended in- service education on nursing process and 64.4% of the participants were working in medical-surgical department.

- It was inferred that the attitude and practice of nurses towards the use of nursing assessment format was high. Area of working was significantly associated with attitude and education was independently associated with practice.

- There was a significant positive correlation between the attitude and practice of nurses regarding Nursing Assessment Format. Therefore encourage nurses to utilize the nursing assessment format. Those who use may be rewarded. New appointees need to be oriented to the use of nursing assessment format. GNMs with less exposure need to be taught and



education should be given to them regarding the nursing assessment format.

### **IMPLICATIONS:**

The study findings have thrown new light on the implications of the future of profession in relation to nursing education, nursing practice, and nursing research.

#### ***Nursing education:***

- Integration of theory and practice is vital need and it is important in nursing profession. Therefore nurse educator can use the result of the study as information to the students.
- Educational process for nurses must include not only the theory of nursing practice, but also a practical method of applying the theory to practice.
- Nurse educators should assess the skills currently taught in nursing programmes and consider what skill actually they need.
- Teaching the assessment skills will enable nurses to contribute a more comprehensive health assessment to the planning and monitoring of peoples health care.
- Continue to encourage the use of nursing assessment format for better nursing care.
- Students must me motivated for better use of nursing assessment format.

- Even GNM students need to be encouraged to utilize nursing assessment format.

#### ***Nursing practice:***

- Standard patient assessment promotes patient sensitive and quality data capture
- Complete nursing assessment is potential for supporting evidence based practice.
- Nurses attitude and belief and practice contributes to and affect the overall outcome of patient care in care settings.
- A complete nursing assessment can act as a base line data for evaluating the care provided.

#### ***Nursing research:***

- Finding of the study shows that the area needs further exploration.
- The study findings would help to expand the scientific body of knowledge upon which further researches can be conducted.
- Large scale studies can be conducted by following various methods of research.



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