



Effectiveness of a Structured Teaching Programme on Knowledge Regarding Community-Based Forensic Nursing and Medico-Legal Responsibilities Among B.Sc. Nursing Students

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Abstract

Introduction: The specialist field of forensic nursing combines nursing science with legal and forensic concepts. Identification, management, documentation, and reporting of medico-legal situations in community settings are the main objectives of community-based forensic nursing, which has become a significant field of practice. In order to guarantee both legal compliance and high-quality patient care, nursing students are expected to have sufficient knowledge of forensic nursing and medico-legal obligations. Nonetheless, research shows that nursing students frequently have insufficient understanding in this field. To increase their comprehension and proficiency, educational interventions are thus required.

Methodology: The effectiveness of a Structured Teaching Programme (STP) on B.Sc. Nursing students' understanding of community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal obligations was assessed using a pre-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test research design. A non-probability convenient sampling strategy was used to pick 100 B.Sc. nursing students from certain nursing institutes in Bihar for the study. Before and after the intervention, knowledge levels were measured using a 40-item structured knowledge questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

Results: According to the pre-test results, just 8% of pupils had adequate knowledge, 30% had fairly adequate knowledge, and 62% had inadequate knowledge. After completing the Structured Teaching Program, 24% of students showed moderately adequate knowledge and 76% showed adequate understanding. The average score on the pre-test was 17.24 ± 4.62 , while the average score on the post-test was 31.78 ± 3.84 . A statistically significant increase in knowledge following the intervention was revealed by the computed paired t-test value ($t=26.41, p<0.001$).

Conclusion: The B.Sc. Nursing students' understanding of community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal obligations improved thanks to the Structured Teaching Program. The results are in favor of including forensic nursing education into nursing programs in order to improve legal accountability and professional competence.

Keywords: Forensic Nursing, Community-Based Forensic Nursing, Medico-Legal Responsibilities, Structured Teaching Programme, Nursing Students, Knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

The B.Sc. Nursing students' understanding of community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal obligations improved thanks to the Structured Teaching Program. Due to growing awareness of violence, abuse, trauma, neglect, and medico-legal issues that arise in healthcare settings, the role of forensic nurses has grown significantly over the past few decades.¹ Nurses have an important role in evidence preservation, injury evaluation, documentation, and legal reporting because they are frequently the first point of contact for both victims and criminals.

Forensic services are being provided in community settings outside of hospitals and emergency rooms because to community-based forensic nursing.² It focuses on identifying and addressing medico-legal issues that impact both individuals and communities, including violence, abuse, domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, sexual assault, and substance misuse. To provide complete treatment and justice for those impacted, community forensic nurses work in conjunction with medical professionals, social workers, law enforcement, and legal authorities.

The need for healthcare workers to comprehend forensic principles has been brought to light by the rising rates of violence and health problems associated with criminal activity.³ Situations requiring legal expertise and ethical decision-making are common for nurses working in community settings. Legal proceedings and patient outcomes can be greatly impacted by the proper assessment, documentation, and reporting of suspected abuse or violence.

A crucial component of nursing practice is medico-legal obligations. Maintaining correct records, getting informed permission, protecting confidentiality, reporting suspicious injuries, and upholding professional standards of care are all legally required of nurses. Healthcare providers and organizations may face legal repercussions if these obligations are not met. As a result, nursing education should sufficiently equip students to handle medico-legal problems with competence and confidence.⁴

Forensic nursing is becoming more widely acknowledged as a developing field in India. Nonetheless, there is very little forensic nursing

curriculum included in undergraduate nursing programs.⁵ As a result, many nursing students graduate with insufficient understanding of legal requirements and forensic principles. This disparity could jeopardize judicial investigations and lower the standard of treatment given to victims of assault.

In underdeveloped nations, where community health nurses regularly work with vulnerable populations, community-based forensic nursing is especially pertinent. Prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation initiatives can greatly benefit from early detection of abuse, neglect, and violence. Nurses with sufficient forensic expertise are better able to support victims and guarantee legal protection.⁶

Numerous studies have shown that nursing students and working nurses lack sufficient understanding on forensic nursing. It has been demonstrated that educational interventions such workshops, seminars, simulation exercises, and structured training programs increase awareness and knowledge about forensic nursing procedures. Therefore, improving forensic nursing education can assist efficient healthcare delivery and improve nurse abilities.⁷

Organized educational interventions created to support methodical learning are known as structured teaching programs.⁸ They give students access to material that is supported by evidence, debate starters, and explanations of common misconceptions. Structured teaching has been widely used in nursing education to enhance clinical abilities and knowledge in a variety of specializations.

The future nursing workforce is represented by B.Sc. nursing students, who should be sufficiently equipped to handle medico-legal circumstances that arise during professional practice. Improving their knowledge of community-based forensic nursing can lead to stronger interprofessional collaboration, better patient outcomes, and increased legal compliance.

The current study was conducted to assess the efficacy of a structured teaching program on B.Sc. students' understanding of community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal duties. nursing students in a few Bihar nursing schools.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the pre-test knowledge regarding community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal responsibilities among B.Sc. Nursing students.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of a Structured Teaching Programme on knowledge regarding community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal responsibilities.
3. To compare pre-test and post-test knowledge scores among B.Sc. Nursing students.
4. To determine the association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

HYPOTHESES

H₁: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores regarding community-based forensic nursing and medico-legal responsibilities among B.Sc. Nursing students.

H₂: There will be a significant association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach:

Quantitative evaluative research approach.

Research Design:

Pre-experimental one-group pre-test-post-test design.

Setting:

Selected nursing colleges of Bihar.

Population:

All B.Sc. Nursing students studying in selected nursing colleges of Bihar.

Sample Size:

100 B.Sc. Nursing students.

Sampling Technique:

Non-probability convenient sampling.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Students willing to participate.
- Students available during data collection.

- B.Sc. Nursing students from first to fourth year.

Exclusion Criteria:

Students absent during data collection.

Students who had previously undergone formal forensic nursing training.

Research Tool

Section A:

Demographic variables including age, gender, year of study, residence, and previous exposure to forensic nursing.

Section B:

Structured Knowledge Questionnaire consisting of 40 multiple-choice questions regarding:

- Concepts of forensic nursing
- Community-based forensic nursing
- Evidence preservation
- Documentation
- Medico-legal responsibilities
- Legal reporting procedures
- Ethical principles

Scoring Pattern:

0–13 = Inadequate Knowledge

14–26 = Moderately Adequate Knowledge

27–40 = Adequate Knowledge

Validity:

The tool was validated by seven experts from nursing education, forensic medicine, and community health nursing.

Reliability:

Split-half reliability coefficient = 0.89.

Data Collection Procedure:

Official authorization was acquired from the relevant authorities. The structured questionnaire was used to measure pre-test knowledge. A 60-minute structured teaching program was given right after the pre-test evaluation. Seven days later, the same questionnaire was used for a post-test assessment.

Ethical Considerations:

- Written informed consent obtained.
- Confidentiality maintained.
- Participation was voluntary.

RESULTS

Table 1: Distribution of Students According to Pre-test Knowledge

Knowledge Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Inadequate	62	62%
Moderately Adequate	30	30%
Adequate	8	8%
Total	100	100%

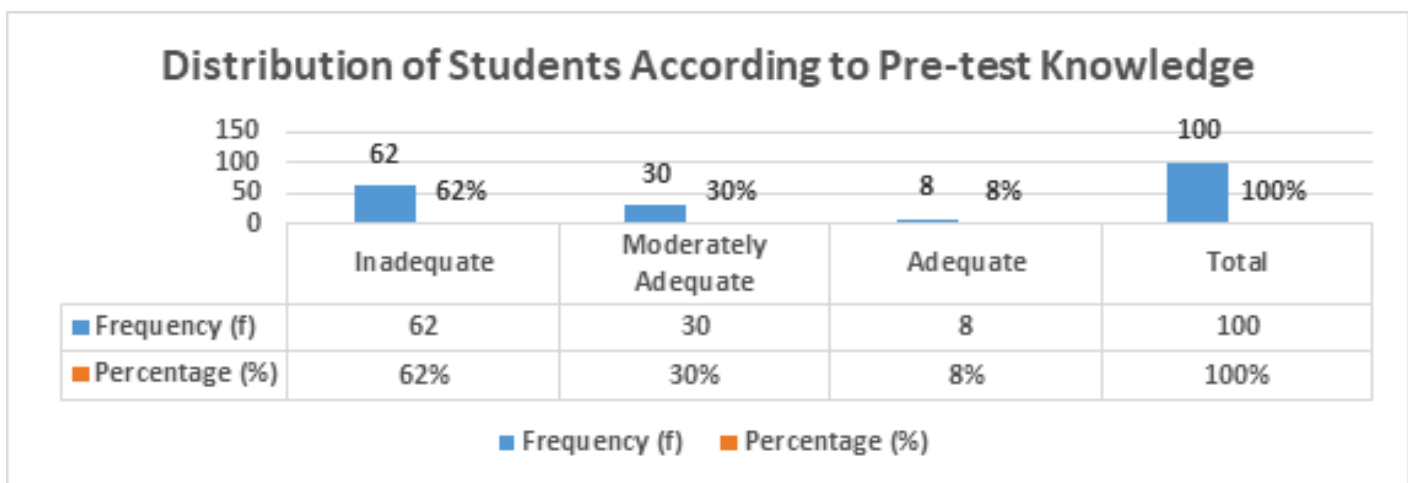


Figure 01: Distribution of Students According to Pre-test Knowledge

Table 2: Distribution of Students According to Post-test Knowledge

Knowledge Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Moderately Adequate	24	24%
Adequate	76	76%
Total	100	100%

Table 3: Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Knowledge Scores

Variable	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value
Pre-test	17.24	4.62	14.54	26.41*
Post-test	31.78	3.84	—	—
Difference	14.54	—	—	26.41*

* Significant at $p < 0.001$.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- Majority (62%) had inadequate knowledge during pre-test.
- Majority (76%) demonstrated adequate knowledge after intervention.
- Mean post-test score was significantly higher than mean pre-test score.
- Structured Teaching Programme significantly improved knowledge.

DISCUSSION

The results showed that prior to the educational intervention, nursing students had inadequate awareness of medico-legal duties and community-based forensic nursing. Previous research have revealed similar results, showing that nursing students have little knowledge of forensic principles and legal requirements.¹⁰

Following the Structured Teaching Program, the post-test results showed a significant increase in knowledge scores. Structured educational treatments are successful methods for improving forensic nursing knowledge, as evidenced by the statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test results.

The findings corroborate earlier research indicating that educational programs enhance nursing students' comprehension of legal obligations, evidence preservation, and forensic recording. The study highlights how undergraduate nursing curriculum must include forensic nursing topics.¹¹

CONCLUSION

The study found that prior to the intervention, B.Sc. nursing students lacked sufficient understanding about medico-legal responsibilities and community-based forensic nursing. Their knowledge levels were greatly raised by the Structured Teaching Program. To improve professional competence and legal accountability, forensic nursing education programs ought to be incorporated into nursing curricula.¹²

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Larger sample sizes may be used in comparable research.
2. Studies comparing government and private nursing schools can be carried out.
3. It is advised to do quasi-experimental research with control groups.
4. Undergraduate nursing curriculum ought to include forensic nursing topics.
5. Regular programs for continuing nursing education should be planned.

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Conflict of Interest: None

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