

# Effectiveness of Information Booklet on Legal Responsibilities of Nurses

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Received: 21/08/2016

Revised: 26/08/2016

Accepted: 02/09/2016

## ABSTRACT

There has been a revolution in health care in the last 50 years as a result of new technologies and treatment. In the new world of nursing practice, legal liability for professional nursing conduct was emerged as an immediate concern. The role of professional nurse has changed in a pragmatic sense from one of legal responsibility of to one of legal accountability. Health care delivery system has group as an industry today and health service consumers are better informed than in the past about health and illness through news papers, magazines, television and multimedia.

In view of the above changes investigator felt that information booklet must be an effective option in enhancing the knowledge of staff nurses on legal responsibilities of nurses.

By this study investigator planned to determine the acceptance and utilization of information booklet among the staff nurses. The study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of an information booklet on legal responsibilities of nurses in terms of knowledge of staff nurses and to seek its relationship with selected factors in selected Government Hospitals of M.P. The conceptual framework of the study was based on system model.

An evaluative research approach with one group pre-test post test design was utilized in the study. The systematic random sampling technique was used to obtain an adequate size of sample. The sample comprised of 50 staff nurses working in the clinical area. The tools developed and utilized for data collection were as follows: structured knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge level of staff nurses on legal responsibilities.

The major findings of the study were the mean post-test knowledge score was significantly higher than the mean pre-test knowledge score. The post knowledge score were found to be associated with the age and clinical experience. Besides that, professional education has not only has relationship with the post-test knowledge score. The information booklet was found to be highly acceptable by the staff nurses.

**Key words:** knowledge, staff nurses, information booklet, legal responsibilities of nurse.

## INTRODUCTION

Nursing is an integral part of the health care system and nurses direct their energies towards the promotion and maintenance and restoration of health.

The role of nurse has expanded rapidly within the past ten years to include expertise specialization autonomy and

accountability. With the advent of consumer protection act of 1986, all professionals i.e., medical, architects, solicitors' chartered accountants, nurses etc. have come with the preview of act. The impact of the health care consumer movement has been to promote increased accountability on the part of all health professional including nurses.

Nurses are the second largest group of professional working in the Health care system. They play a very important role in the care of the patient in the hospital. The presence of nurses improves the speed the recovery room illnesses. Full time nursing services are essential to providing quality care to patients.

Legal responsibility in nursing practices is very important legal terminology and court procedure requires highly specialized knowledge. Detailed knowledge of legal terminology is no doubt unnecessary in nursing practice, but an understanding of legal responsibility and how the nurses is obligated to the law are essential.

With the present growing awareness of the law by the public and the profession, an understanding of legal responsibility is becoming important.

Nurses have legal responsibility for accurately reporting and recording patient's conditions, treatment and responses to care. The medical record is a written or computerized account of a patient's illness and treatment that includes information submitted by all members of the patient health care team.

Nurses must be aware of legal definition of death because they must document all events that, when the patient is in their care. Sometimes, there will be issues of euthanasia, either active or passive. Active euthanasia is defined as intentional homicide e.g. intentionally administering a lethal dose of morphine to a patient cause death. An example of passive euthanasia includes, removing breathing support or withholding transfusion from a terminally ill patient with irreversible brain damage, May raises legal questions.

Nurses have other specific legal duties which include, treat a deceased person with dignity (wrongful handling is a ground for a lawsuit) and obtaining consent for an autopsy from the decedent (before death) or a close family member (after death).

For the implementation of high quality of nursing practice in the world of latest and technological advances a good knowledge of legal responsibility is a necessity.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to evaluate the effectiveness of an information booklet on legal responsibilities of the nurse's in terms of knowledge of staff nurses and to seek its relationship with selected factors of selected government hospitals of M.P.

### Objectives:

- ❖ To develop information booklet for staff nurses on legal responsibilities of nurses.
- ❖ To assess the knowledge of staff nurses before and after the administration of information booklet on legal responsibilities of nurses.
- ❖ To seek the association between knowledge of staff nurses with selected variables such as
  - ✓ Age.
  - ✓ Professional education.
  - ✓ Clinical experience.
- ❖ To determine the acceptance and utilization of the information booklet on legal responsibilities of nurses.

### Hypotheses of the study

**H1:** The mean post test knowledge score of staff nurses regarding legal responsibilities after the administration of the information booklet will be significantly higher than their mean pre-test knowledge score as evident from the structured knowledge questionnaire at 0.05 level of significance.

**H2:** There will be significant association between post test knowledge score of the staff nurses and selected variables after the administration of information booklet.

## METHODOLOGY

- Research approach: Evaluative approach
- Research design: one group pre- test and post-test design
- Setting of the study: Govt. Hospital of M.P
- Sample: Staff Nurses
- Sample size: 50

- Sampling technique: Purposive Sampling

**Inclusion criteria:**

- Staff nurses who were available during the data collection period.
- Staff nurses who were willing to participate in the study.
- Staff nurses who can read and write English fluently.

**Tools and data collection:**

The following tools were developed to generate data based on the conceptual framework and objectives of the study.

- **Demographic Data:** Include 8 items on personal data such as age, sex, professional education, marital status, total years of clinical experience, present areas of posting, post held, area of clinical experience and state board council registration.
- **Knowledge questionnaire:** was prepared to assess the knowledge of staff nurses before and after the administration of information booklet.
- **Opinionnaire:** structured opinionnaire was prepared to determine the opinion of staff nurses about the acceptability and utility of information booklet.
- **Information booklet** has been prepared under the following points which was very useful for nurses to know about the legal responsibilities.
  1. Law
  2. Torts
  3. Patient bill or right
  4. Registration
  5. Documentation
  6. Death and dying
  7. Standard of care
  8. Consumer protection act
  9. Nurses role to prevent legal complications
  10. Preventing legal problems in nursing practice

**RESULTS**

**Mean median, mode and standard deviation of pre-test and post- test knowledge scores of staff nurses**

- The mean post-test knowledge score was significantly higher than the Mean Pre-test score of Staff Nurses on Legal Responsibilities of Nurses.
- The post-test Knowledge Score were found to be associated with the age & clinical experience.
- Professional education had association with both pre-test and post test knowledge score.

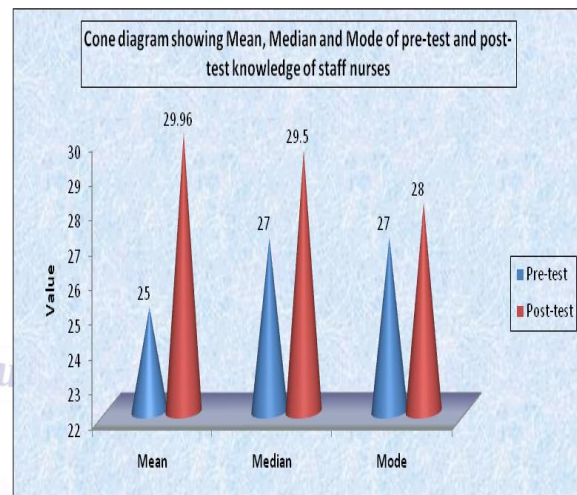


Figure 1

The cone diagram shown indicates the distribution of knowledge scores of staff nurses explains that the mean, median and mode post knowledge scores of staff nurses 29.96, 29.5, and 28 were higher than the mean, median, and mode of pre-test knowledge scores 25, 27 and 27 respectively.

**Table 1: Comparison of knowledge score of staff nurses.**

Knowledge Test	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation	t-Value
Pre-test	25.00	27.0	27.0	4.09	t = 14.52 (Significant at 0.05 level)
Post-test	29.96	29.5	28.0	3.73	

At p-value at 0.05 level

The data presented in above table indicates that the mean post test knowledge score of staff nurses (29.96), was higher than their mean pretest knowledge score (25). It was discussed that all the subjects achieved a higher scores in the post-test than in the pre-test except standard derivation. This is suggesting the knowledge gain by each subject. The finding also revealed that the post-test scores were more homogenous (SD: 3.73) than the pre-test

scores (SD; 4.09), t-value (14.52) was found to be significant at  $p = 0.05$  level.

Thus, the information booklet was effective in enhancing the knowledge of staff nurse regarding legal responsibilities.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion drawn from the study is

1. There was a deficiency of knowledge among staff nurses regarding legal responsibilities of nurses.
2. The information booklet was found to be effective in enhancing the knowledge of staff nurses regarding legal responsibilities.
3. There was significant increase in knowledge among staff nurses with age and who have more clinical experience except professional education.
4. The information booklet- the legal responsibilities of nurses has high acceptability and utility among staff nurses.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A similar study can be replicated on larger samples different hospital and in community settings.
2. Similar study in legal aspects can also be conducted to assess the knowledge of the practitioners.
3. A study can be conducted to assess the attitude and practice of staff nurses regarding legal responsibilities.
4. A follow up study can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of information booklet of knowledge.
5. A comparative study can be done to evaluate the effectiveness of

information booklet and other teaching strategies, i.e. Manual, computer assisted learning, pamphlets, video films, etc. in creating awareness among staff nurse regarding legal responsibilities of nurses.

6. A survey can be conducted to know the opinion of the nursing personnel regarding legal responsibilities.
7. The information booklet can be updated from time to time.

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## BIOGRAPHIES



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How to cite this article: Saxena S, Saxena A. Effectiveness of information booklet on legal responsibilities of nurses. *Int J Res Rev.* 2016; 3(9):54-57.

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