

Sigma's VIRTUAL 31st International Nursing Research Congress (Wednesday, 22 July - Friday, 24 July)

Knowledge and Attitude of Omani Healthcare Students Toward HIV/AIDS Patients: A National Survey

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Purpose:

According to the latest statistical report from Ministry of health (2017), there are 1,597 Omanis living with HIV. In the same report, it was documented that the number of the diagnosed HIV case was increase by 11% compared to the year 2016.

The stigma towered people with HIV/AIDS is continued to be a serious healthcare concern. Healthcare students require sufficient knowledge and skills to ensure their ability to provide effective and high quality care. Further, their attitudes toward HIV/AIDS patients are important to insure their readiness to provide the care equally along with other patients. Therefor, the purpose of this study was to explore HIV knowledge among Omani healthcare students and to describe their attitudes toward HIV/AIDS patients.

Methods:

This national study utilized the cross-sectional, descriptive design. The study involved a convenient sample of healthcare Omani students from five different institutions that offer health-related academic programs. An online questionnaire was designed for this study. Two instruments were used: HIV Knowledge Questionnaire by Carey and Schroder (2002) and the AIDS Attitudes Survey by Froman and Owen (1997). Data were collected by using Google drive survey and analyzed by SPSS®-PC Version 23.

Results:

A total of 379 students filled the online survey, of which 256 (67.5%) were nursing students and 123 (32.5%) were medical students. Of the total participants 65.4% have interacted with HIV/AIDS patients during their clinical courses. The overall mean knowledge level was 10.6 ($SD = 2.7$), which represent 58.8% of the maximum score. The overall mean avoidance attitude was 50.2 ($SD = 11.6$), which represents 59.6% of the maximum score. Further, the overall empathy attitude was 32.4 ($SD = 6.70$) which represent 77.1% of the maximum score. The mean knowledge score for medical students ($M = 11.3$, $SD = 2.70$) was higher the mean for nursing students ($M = 10.4$, $SD = 2.8$, $p = 0.013$). There were no significant differences in the total avoidance and total empathy attitudes among nursing and medical students.

Conclusion:

The study showed that the majority of healthcare students had sub-optimal knowledge & there are multiple misconceptions related to HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention and

treatment. Further the study showed that the healthcare students had a considerable good level of empathy attitude toward HIV/AIDS. This reflects their readiness to provide the care for those patients. However, this readiness should be supported with the appropriate knowledge.

Title:

Knowledge and Attitude of Omani Healthcare Students Toward HIV/AIDS Patients: A National Survey

Keywords:

HIV knowledge, HIV stigma and HIV/ AIDS

Abstract Summary:

Sufficient HIV knowledge among healthcare students is critical for providing effective and high quality care. Although, the majority of Omani healthcare students interacted with HIV/AIDS patients, they demonstrated sub-optimal HIV knowledge level. Omani healthcare students reported different misconceptions related to HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention and treatment.

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