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A study on the awareness of medical ethics among internees and post graduate scholars of Sarada Krishna Homoeopathic Medical College

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Abstract

As medical ethics subject is included in educational curriculum of major medical institutes, the ethics specialists and ethical committees has been increased. Medical practice is been commercially increased and ethics has gone back. In India, complaints against physicians appear to be escalating. In major medical professionals, moral qualities is been influenced by ethical awareness. So, formally training the students in ethics during their undergraduate course itself may help to overcome this situation. This study is to be undertaken against this background. Here, a survey is been conducted in Internees and Post Graduate Scholars by assessing the Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Medical Ethics in Sarada Krishna Homoeopathic Medical College. Therefore, a descriptive cross-sectional study is been conducted based on KAP [Knowledge, Attitude, Practice] questionnaire. A random sample of 50 participants among internees & PG Scholars who are undergoing training in Sarada Krishna Homoeopathic College was included in the study. They have been provided with a structured Questionnaire. On evaluating their answers, the Internees are more lagging in the Attitude and Knowledge towards Medical Ethics.

Keywords: Attitude, awareness, knowledge, medical ethics, practice, questionnaire

1. Introduction

Medical ethics – medical ethics deals with the moral principles to be followed by physicians in their dealings with each other's, their patients and the state ^[1]. The generic term Ethics, refers to moral code of conduct in civil society and rules, customs and belief of civilians society ^[2]. Morally right and wrong in human action is been verified by norms of moral conduct ^[3]. Also, it can be described as "analytical activity of assumptions, attitudes, arguments, beliefs, concepts, emotions, and reasons are the fundamentals in medico moral decision making principles ^[4].

The major essential objective of medical health sector is to render service to the humanity with giving full respect to man ^[5]. The Codes of Medical Ethics in Medical field, it describes how the Registered Medical Practitioner treats their patients. It regulates the principles of good medical practice and highlights the qualities of professional medical ethics ^[3].

From the period of Hippocratic Oath origin and West tradition of religious healing, the medical ethics field has been existed ^[6]. Although the principles of Medical Ethics is generally accepted, every country has done certain modifications and specific interpretations rationally with their cultures and religious beliefs in standards of medical practice in health sectors ^[3].

Traditionally, Medical ethics cases have focused on the ethical issues that arise between individual physicians and patients ^[7]. As there is advancement in medicine and healthcare sectors, physicians must be aware of all the basic ethical principles. Being unaware about ethical principles, devaluation in physician and patient relationships and increase in legal actions by patients on physicians has been increased ^[8]. As there are increased malpractices by health care sectors, there is stained image in medical professionals.

As the physician-patient relationship is based on trust, the physician should always place patient welfare above the physician's own self-interest ^[9]. "Truth telling is essential for improving medical practice and also the professional relationship between physicians" ^[10].

In Homoeopathic system of medicine, the principles of Medical Ethics, has been laid by Central Council of Homoeopathic Practitioner Regulations, 1982, which has amended from now and then based on increasing standards of medical practice in health care sectors, and

every Homoeopathic Registered Medical Practitioner is expected to be conversant on these principles from the commencement of their practice [5].

Materials and Methods

Selection of sample

A random sample of 50 participants among internees & PG Scholars who are undergoing training in Sarada Krishna Homoeopathic College were included in the study. On giving the description about the survey details to all participants, a written agreement was obtained from them.

Study design

A descriptive cross sectional study based on KAP [Knowledge, Attitude and Practice] questionnaire.

Intervention

Based on past researches and in discussion with professors of Forensic medicine department, the participants were provided with a structured questionnaire.

In Knowledge section, the questionnaire includes about basic ethical principles and guidelines and its scores was based on answer pattern of yes, no and don't know. In Attitude section, it includes the ethical perspective and it's necessities for which its scores was based on Likert scale pattern of agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, and definitely disagree. Likewise in Practice section, it includes medical ethical practices for which its score was based on answers of never, rarely, sometimes, frequently and always. A detailed analysis was done based on the responses of all the participants. The discretion and anonymousness of every participant was maintained.

Data processing and analysis

Since, the study is a descriptive cross-sectional study, components of descriptive statistics such as means and percentages for each category were calculated. The scores differences between each participant in KAP questionnaires were assessed. The data was analyzed using Microsoft office excel 2010.

Results & Discussion

The total count of participants who took part in this study was 50, among them, 25 were internees and 25 were Post Graduates. They were assessed for their knowledge of, Attitude towards and Practice of Medical Ethics.

Through this study it was found that, when comparing the results based on the criteria as per KAP questionnaire, internees scored less than Post Graduates in knowledge and attitude. i.e. 71.5% and 40.6% for internees and 80.5% and 76.33% for the post graduates respectively. This is because internees have less clinical experience, practical knowledge and exposure towards patients and various clinical conditions when compared to post graduates.

While in practice of Medical Ethics, internees scored more than post graduates i.e. 78.5% and 76.66% respectively as they are sticking more towards the theoretical aspect rather than acting according to the necessity of the situation.

Table 1: Average % of Marks Obtained By Internees and Post Graduates in Knowledge, Attitude & Practice

Kap	Internees	Postgraduates
Knowledge	71.5%	80.5%
Attitude	40.6%	76.33%
Practice	78.5%	76.66%

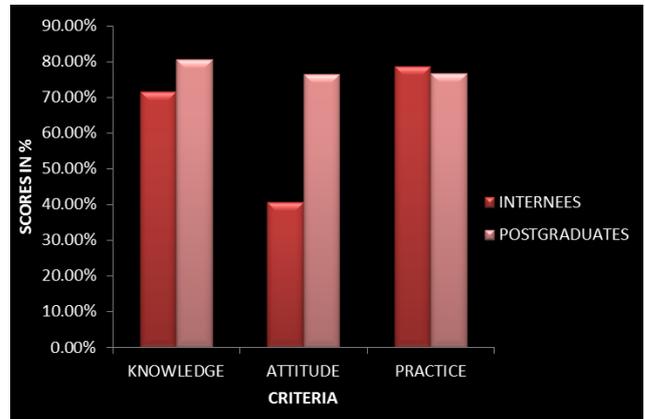


Fig 1: Average % of Marks Obtained By Internees and Post Graduates In Knowledge, Attitude & Practice

The Internees have got an average of 71.5% in Knowledge, 40.6% in Attitude and 78.5% in Practice section; The Postgraduates have got an average of 80.5% in Knowledge, 70.33% in Attitude and 76.66% in Practice section.

Hence, this study clearly portrays the need for awareness on Medical Ethics among Internees and this study hence plays a vital role in highlighting the present situation of lack of awareness about Medical Ethics.

Conclusion

From this study, I conclude that the Knowledge of Medical Ethics in Internees is comparatively less than that of the Postgraduates, and in Attitude towards Medical Ethics in Internees is much more less than that of Postgraduates, and in the Practice towards the Medical Ethics in Internees is slightly better than Postgraduates. According to KAP questionnaire, the score was classified into poor (< or = 50%), fair (51-69%) and good (70% and above). As a result of this, the Internees are more lagging in the Attitude and Knowledge towards Medical Ethics. So these sections should be looked upon and adequate and proper training must be given to internees regarding these areas of medical ethics.

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.

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