

**A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF
KNOWLEDGE REGARDING PALLIATIVE CARE AMONG 5TH SEMESTER
B.SC. NURSING STUDENTS AND TO IDENTIFY EXISTING
KNOWLEDGE GAPS IN THE COLLEGE OF NURSING,
ADESH UNIVERSITY, BATHINDA, PUNJAB**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The World Health Organization defines Palliative care as – “an approach that improves the Quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-limiting illnesses by the prevention and relief of suffering through identification and impeccable Assessment and treatment of pain and other problems- physical, psycho-social and spiritual.

Aim: The research approach is the broad-based procedure for the collection of data in a particular situation. In view of nature of the problem and to accomplish the objectives of the study for that quantitative evaluative approach was adopted for the study.

Materials and Methods: A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students using a convenience sampling technique. Data were collected through a structured self-administered questionnaire, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results: The findings showed that 73% of students had average knowledge, 5% had good knowledge, and 22% had below-average knowledge regarding palliative care, indicating an overall moderate level of knowledge.

Conclusion: The study concludes that most nursing students have average knowledge of palliative care, highlighting the need for improved education and training to enhance their understanding and clinical practice.

Keywords: Palliative care, renal failure, symptoms, pain.

INTRODUCTION

Palliative care is a vital component of modern healthcare that aims to enhance the quality of life of patients and their families who are dealing with life-threatening or life-limiting illnesses by focusing on the prevention and relief of suffering through early identification, comprehensive assessment, and effective management of pain and other physical, psychosocial, and spiritual problems. Unlike curative treatment that primarily targets disease eradication, palliative care adopts a holistic and patient-centered approach that emphasizes comfort, dignity, emotional support, and improved well-being throughout the course of illness, regardless of prognosis or stage. With the increasing global and national burden of chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disorders, renal failure, and neurological conditions, the demand for accessible and quality palliative care services has risen significantly, particularly in India where awareness, availability, and integration of such services into the healthcare system are still developing. Nurses, being the largest group of healthcare professionals and primary caregivers, play a crucial role in the delivery of palliative care by providing continuous bedside care, managing symptoms, offering psychological support,

and facilitating communication between patients, families, and the multidisciplinary team. Therefore, it is essential that nursing students, especially those in advanced stages of their education such as 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students, possess adequate knowledge, skills, and a positive attitude toward palliative care to ensure effective and compassionate practice in future clinical settings. However, existing evidence suggests that many nursing students have limited knowledge and misconceptions regarding palliative care concepts, principles, and practices, which may negatively impact the quality of care they provide. Identifying these knowledge gaps is important for strengthening nursing education and improving patient outcomes. In this context, the present study is undertaken to assess the knowledge regarding palliative care among 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students in the College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda, Punjab, with the aim of evaluating their level of understanding and providing insights that may help in enhancing curriculum planning, training programs, and overall competency in palliative care delivery.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a quantitative approach with a descriptive cross-sectional design to assess knowledge regarding

palliative care among 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students at the College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda, Punjab. A sample of students was selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique based on their availability and willingness to participate. Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire consisting of demographic variables and multiple-choice questions related to palliative care. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was taken from participants, ensuring confidentiality. The data were collected in a classroom setting and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL AND TECHNIQUES

Data for the present study were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire specifically designed to assess the knowledge regarding palliative care among 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students. The tool was developed after an extensive review of relevant literature and in consultation with experts in the field of nursing and palliative care to ensure its content validity and relevance to the study objectives. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections: Section A consisted of demographic variables such as age, gender, previous clinical exposure to palliative care, and source of information, while Section B included multiple-choice questions aimed at evaluating the students' knowledge related to various aspects of palliative care, including its definition, principles, goals, pain and symptom management, communication skills, ethical issues, and end-of-life care. Each correct response was assigned a score, and the total score was used to determine the level of knowledge among participants.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study was conducted on a small group of students to assess the feasibility, clarity, and reliability of the tool, and necessary modifications were made based on the findings. Formal permission was obtained from the concerned authorities of the institution, and ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants after explaining the purpose and significance of the study, and

confidentiality and anonymity were assured. The data collection was carried out in a classroom setting, where participants were gathered and provided with the questionnaire along with clear instructions for completion. Adequate time was given to ensure thoughtful responses, and the researcher was present to clarify any doubts without influencing the answers. After completion, the questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and prepared systematically for further data analysis.

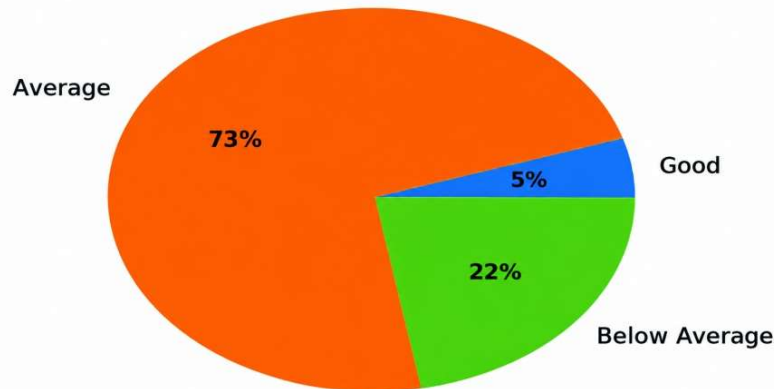
RESULTS

The findings of the present study reveal that the majority of 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students possess an average level of knowledge regarding palliative care, indicating a moderate understanding of its principles and practices. The analysis of knowledge scores shows that most students fall within the average category, accounting for 73% of the total sample, while only a small proportion of students (5%) demonstrated good knowledge. Additionally, 22% of the students were found to have below-average knowledge, highlighting a significant gap in understanding among a considerable portion of the participants. The mean knowledge score of the students, along with a standard deviation of ± 5.180 , reflects some variability in the level of knowledge among the respondents, suggesting that while some students are relatively well-informed, others lack adequate awareness of key aspects of palliative care. Overall, the results indicate that although the majority of students have a basic and acceptable level of knowledge, there remains a need for further improvement through enhanced educational interventions, training programs, and curriculum strengthening to ensure that nursing students are better prepared to provide effective and compassionate palliative care in clinical practice. The results showed that majority of 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students were having average knowledge regarding palliative care. In 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students mean knowledge score level is with a S.D ± 5.180 . The overall finding shows that students having average knowledge regarding Palliative care.

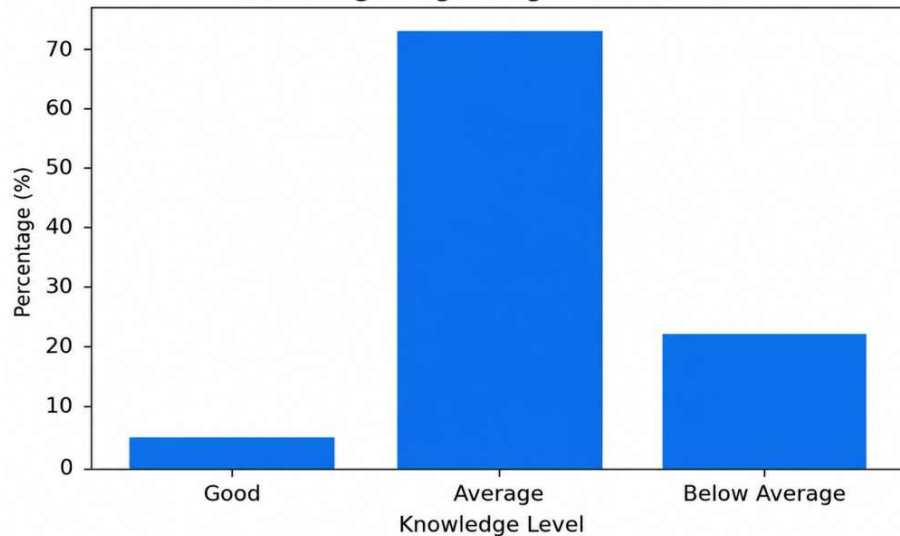
Table: Distribution of Knowledge Regarding Palliative Care

Knowledge Level	Percentage (%)
Good	5%
Average	73%
Below Average	22%
Total	100%

Distribution of Knowledge Levels



Knowledge Regarding Palliative Care



CONCLUSION

The present study assessed the knowledge regarding palliative care among 5th semester B.Sc. Nursing students at the College of Nursing, Adesh University, Bathinda, Punjab. The findings revealed that the majority of students had moderate knowledge, with some demonstrating adequate understanding, while a smaller proportion had inadequate knowledge regarding palliative care principles, pain management, and holistic patient support.

The study highlights that although nursing students possess a basic understanding of palliative care, there are gaps in specific areas such as psychological support, end-of-life care, and communication skills with patients and families.

Conflict of interest: Nil

Source of Funding: Self

Ethical clearance: Taken

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