

Knowledge, attitudes, and practice related to patients' rights among patients admitted to surgical wards of Teaching Hospital Jaffna and associated socio-demographic factors

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Background: Respecting and protecting patients' rights is an essential part of providing good healthcare. It is one of the fundamental rights of all human beings without distinction as to race, colour, and religion. This study was designed to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practice related to patients' rights and the influence of socio-demographic factors on patients' rights among patients admitted to surgical wards at Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Methods: Across-sectional descriptive study was conducted among 200 patients. Systematic sampling was used to select the sample. Details relevant to patients' socio-demographic factors and information regarding patients' rights were obtained by using an interviewer-administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed and processed using SPSS.

Results: The mean age of the participants was 47.23 ± 18.047 years. Of the participants, 56% were males and 44% were females. Only 15.5% of patients had good knowledge on patients' rights with 61.5% and 23% having moderate and poor knowledge, respectively. In terms of attitudes and practice, respondents feared being victimized if they complained when healthcare workers did not respect their privacy and dignity. A third of participants stated that doctors had not explained their diagnosis, treatment modality, risks associated with the disease and treatment, prognosis, and appropriate alternatives. While a majority of respondents with secondary (67.2%) and tertiary (64.3%) education levels had moderate knowledge on patients' rights, about half of the respondents who had never been to school or had primary education had a poor knowledge of patients' rights. Apart from education level ($P < 0.001$), gender ($P \leq 0.059$), age ($P < 0.001$), occupation ($P < 0.001$) and family income ($P < 0.001$) were significantly associated with knowledge of patients' rights.

Conclusion: The government should implement national awareness campaigns and programmes to make the public aware about patients' rights, and implement mechanisms to ensure that healthcare providers respect the rights of patients.

Key words: Patients' rights, Teaching Hospital Jaffna