

Knowledge and self-reported practice of standard precautions and associated factors among doctors and nurses in the four major specialty units of Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Background and objective: Practice of standard precautions reduces the risk of hospital-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance. This study aims to assess knowledge and self-reported practice of standard precautions and associated factors among doctors and nurses in the four major specialty units of Teaching Hospital Jaffna (THJ).

Methods: This is a descriptive cross-sectional study among doctors and nurses in the four major specialty units of THJ. Proportionate stratified random sampling was used to select participants. Data were collected by a self-administered questionnaire. The mean score for knowledge was converted into a percentage. Knowledge cut-offs were developed under the guidance of supervisors. Frequencies and proportions were used to report knowledge levels and practices. Associations between knowledge, practice and selected factors were assessed with the chi-square test.

Results: In total 256 doctors (n=99) and nurses (n=157) participated with a response rate of 78.6% and 89.2%, respectively. In the sample, 35%, 53% and 12% recorded good, average, and poor knowledge, respectively, with 38%, 55%, and 7% of doctors and 33%, 52%, and 15% of nurses scoring good, average, and poor knowledge, respectively. Only 62% of nurses and 52% of doctors reported performing hand hygiene between patients; 81% of nurses and 68% of doctors performed hand hygiene before leaving the ward. Participants with ≤ 3 years' experience in the current designation had higher knowledge ($p=0.002$), and those working in surgery and gynaecology/obstetrics reported better practice ($p=0.04$). There was no significant association between healthcare worker category and knowledge or practice.

Conclusion: Knowledge and practice of standard precautions among healthcare workers is not at a satisfactory level at THJ. Urgent measures, such as regular in-service training and monitoring compliance, are needed to rectify this situation. The infection control team at THJ should be strengthened.

Keywords: Standard Precautions, Knowledge, Practice, Healthcare Workers, Jaffna