

Original Research Article

<http://dx.doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2016.511.062>

Awareness and Attitude of Medical Negligence and Medical Ethics among Interns and Resident Doctors

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Medical Negligence and Medical Ethics, Intern or a resident doctor.

Article Info

Accepted:

24 October 2016

Available Online:

10 November 2016

The objectives of the present study are to evaluate the awareness and attitude of interns and resident doctors, in Mangalore, about medical negligence and medical ethics. Participants were either intern or a resident doctor who was working in Mangalore. Participants were randomly chosen from both genders. Total number of interns were 269 (154 Males and 115 Females) and that of residents were 231 (134 males and 97 females). The study population lacks significant amount of knowledge about medical negligence and medical ethics. Majority of the interns have poor knowledge about the subject (61.3%). Only 4.8% of resident doctors have good knowledge and 48.1% of resident doctors have average knowledge. Study indicates that there should be a prompt action to cover the lack of awareness among doctors for their own safety and as well as that of the patients.

Introduction

Medical negligence is defined as absence of reasonable care and skill, or willful negligence of a medical practitioner in the treatment of a patient, which cause bodily injury or death of the patient. Ethics has been defined as "the moral principles that govern a person's behavior or how an activity is conducted" and medical ethics as "the branch of knowledge concerned with moral principles" (Catherine Soanes, 2001).

Medical profession is the combination of the knowledge about diseases, along with the understanding and valuing the human feelings. So a medical practitioner is expected to have skills and knowledge in his field

along with good ethical standards and legal awareness (Unnikrishnan *et al.*, 2014).

Medical profession nowadays has changed its motive of service to commercialization, due to which functioning and services of hospitals and clinics have also undergone changes. The knowledge of medical negligence and medical ethics are essential for maintaining the patient doctor relationship and prevent the commercialization of the profession (Haripriya Haripriya, 2014). The public awareness regarding the negligence and ethical conduct by medical practitioners and the complaints against doctors and the

number of medical litigation by unsatisfied patients is rising day by day Ignorance of the law cannot be used as a ground for escaping punishment. Therefore doctors should familiar with the regulations and laws dealing with medical practice. Training period is the crucial time for developing the ethical views and awareness in young doctors (Raj *et al.*, 2013).

The objectives of the present study are to evaluate the awareness and attitude of interns and resident doctors, in Mangalore, about medical negligence and medical ethics.

Methods and Material

Study was conducted on 500 interns and resident doctors in Mangalore. Random sampling technique was used. These selected group of participants were given a self structured questionnaire consisting of ten questions. Their response was collected. The responses to the provided questionnaire were studied in detail and analysed. The questions in the questionnaire were mainly in relation to procedural awareness, awareness of laws, awareness about the causes of negligence & ethical issues.

Results and Discussion

In this study was done on 500 participants. Participants where either intern or a resident

doctor who was working in Mangalore. Participants were randomly chosen from both genders. Total number of interns were 269 (154 Males and 115 Females) and that of residents were 231 (134 males and 97females). Study shows that, participants are more aware of the questions related to identifying cases of medical negligence and use of Red Cross emblem. They are least aware about the questions related to euthanasia, vicarious liability, and minimum age for giving consent. Resident doctors are more aware of situation involving medical negligence, vicarious liability and use of Red Cross emblem. Interns are more aware of consent and euthanasia.

Participants were allotted score according to their response. 1point was given for correct response, while no marks were allotted for wrong response. Score 8 and above was categorised into good knowledge. Scores from 5 to 7 were categorized into average knowledge and scores 4 and below was categorized into poor knowledge. Majority of interns - 61.3% have poor knowledge, 38.7% have average knowledge about medical negligence and medical ethics, while none of the intern participants had good knowledge. Meanwhile in resident doctors 4.8% have good knowledge, 48.1% have average knowledge, 47.1% have poor knowledge about medical negligence and medical ethics while.

Table.1

GROUP	GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	TOTAL
Interns	Males	154	57.2%	269 (53.7%)
	Females	115	42.8%	
Residents	Males	135	58.2%	232 (46.3%)
	Females	97	41.8%	

Table.2

QUESTIONS	OPTIONS	INTERN	RESIDENT	P VALUE
1. To identify a situation involving medical negligence.	Correct	231 (51.6%)	217 (48.4%)	0.005
	Incorrect	38	15	
2. Vicarious liability	Correct	40 (43.5%)	52 (56.5%)	0.030
	Incorrect	229	180	
3. Consent in a case of obstetrics.	Correct	178 (54.4%)	149 (45.6%)	0.696
	Incorrect	91	82	
4. Minimum age for consent.	Correct	52 (57.8%)	38 (42.2%)	0.391
	Incorrect	217	194	
5. Ethical issue in artificial insemination.	Correct	86 (53.1%)	76 (46.9%)	0.851
	Incorrect	183	156	
6. Knowledge about euthanasia.	Correct	29 (64.4%)	16 (35.6%)	0.129
	Incorrect	240	216	
7. Ethical issue about delivery.	Correct	67 (51.1%)	64 (48.9%)	0.496
	Incorrect	202	168	
8. Negligence in a situation of emergency.	Correct	159 (52.5%)	144 (47.5%)	0.499
	Incorrect	110	88	
9. Knowledge about Red Cross emblem.	Correct	165 (49.7%)	167 (50.3%)	0.012
	Incorrect	183	156	
10. Awareness about product liability.	Correct	73 (52.9%)	65 (47.1%)	0.826
	Incorrect	196	167	

Table.3

Knowledge and awareness	Interns	Residents
Good Knowledge	0%	4.8%
Average knowledge	38.7%	48.1%
Poor knowledge	61.3%	47.1%

Results of the study are consistent the study done by Haripriya A, Haripriya V and Rai JJ, Acharya R.V, Dave D. In their study S.D. Nanandkar, G.S. Chavan have suggested that periodical CME programmes, re orientation programmes and medical ethics and acts related to medical practice in postgraduate curriculum to solve the lack of awareness among doctors. The study population lacks the awareness about medico-legal issues, relevant laws, medical negligence and medical ethics. Many of the

participants are not aware that most of their act can be medico legal issues. The curriculum for students should give more importance in regard to medico-legal aspects and for resident doctors, legal issues of hospital cases should be discussed & there should be learning methods about medicolegal and ethical issues. This awareness and legal issues and ethical matters is very much necessary among doctors for their own safety and as well as that of the patients.

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How to cite this article:

Alex. M. Varghese, Vina Ravi Vaswani, B. Kishor Kumar and Venkatkrishna Shenoy. 2016. Awareness and Attitude of Medical Negligence and Medical Ethics among Interns and Resident Doctors. *Int.J.Curr.Microbiol.App.Sci.* 5(11): 532-535.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20546/ijcmas.2016.511.062>