



Nursing Students' Knowledge about Caring for the Elderly

Nasir Muwfaq Younis¹ | Yasein Hasan Ismail Salih²

¹Prof, PhD. College of Nursing
/ University of Mosul/IRAQ

²Assist. Lecturer. University of
Al-Kitab /College of Nursing



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Abstract:

Background: The population is getting older, and the age group of adults 65 and older is the fastest growing, with significant increases, particularly in developing countries.

Objective: To assess the Nursing students' knowledge about caring for the Elderly.

Methods: A descriptive study carried out at the University of Mosul in the Nineveh Governorate between February 2, 2024, and January 3, 2024. For this investigation, probability (a simple random sample) was chosen. 100 students make up the sample of nursing students at Mosul University. A special consent form was used to obtain the subject's consent to participate in the study.

Results: The results of this study indicate that the majority of the sample, which consisted of 100 nursing students, was between the ages of 18 and 20 (65%). The male sample was larger than the female sample by 66%, and 79% of the sample lived in an urban area. Additionally, a high percentage of the sample—81%) was single.

Conclusion: The study came to the conclusion that one of its shortcomings is that it only included nursing students from one university and a relatively small sample size, which limits how broadly the research's conclusions can be applied. A larger sample size, however, might yield better results in the future. The findings also show that nursing students in Mosul City, Iraq, have little awareness of the negative effects of older adults.

Keywords: Nursing students', knowledge, caring , Elderly.

Introduction:

Globally, the population is getting older, and those 65 and older are the age group that is growing the fastest, with significant increases, particularly in developing countries ^(1, 2). By 2050, it is expected that there will be more than 88 million senior citizens in the country ⁽³⁾. Based on estimates from the Central Statistics Bureau for 2018, the percentage of elderly people in Iraq has reached 3%, indicating that the country's society is young. Due to the population's improved health, the number of older people reached 1.2 million in 2018, making up 3%) of the total. This percentage will rise to 3.5% in 2020 and 4.4% in 2030 ⁽⁴⁾. Providing care for the elderly is a top priority for

nurses, and handling them calls for specialized knowledge and abilities. The concept of ageism "is perpetuated by the portrayal of older people as frail, ill, suffering mental deterioration, poor and dependent, and the alternative portrayal of living affluent life styles and scrounging off the welfare state" ⁽⁵⁾. The demand for health care has increased as a result of older adults' increased risk of developing chronic diseases ⁽⁶⁾. The bulk of patients admitted to most hospitals are older adults, and nurses' ability to meet these patients' physical, mental, and emotional needs depends on their understanding of, familiarity with, and attitudes toward older adults ⁽⁷⁾. One of the most challenging aspects of nursing education is preparing nurses to

care for the elderly population ⁽⁸⁾. According to studies, patients benefit from nurses with greater knowledge, sufficient skill, and a positive attitude toward older adults; this results in patients staying in the hospital for shorter periods of time and having lower readmission rates ⁽⁹⁾. A review of the literature reveals that there are many issues with nursing education for older adults, including nurses' unfavorable attitudes toward them and other variables that influence those attitudes. An assessment of nurses' attitudes and expertise in providing care for senior citizens is imperative. Determining nurses' attitudes toward senior citizens and what drives them to deliver better care are also crucial⁽¹⁰⁾.

Methods and Materials:

A descriptive study carried out at the University of Mosul in the Nineveh Governorate between February 2, 2024, and January 3, 2024. The Nineveh Governorate was the site of the current investigation. It is a northern Iraqi governorate, with Mosul serving as its capital. The second-biggest city in Iraq, Mosul is situated 465 kilometers north of Baghdad. Students at the University of Mosul's College of Nursing provided the sample. The University of Mosul conducted the study over the course of three months, from February 2, 2024, to January 3, 2024. For this investigation, probability (a simple random sample) was chosen. 100 students make up the sample of nursing students at Mosul University. A

specific consent form was used to obtain the subject's consent to participate in the study. Each student who was interviewed for the purpose of filling out the questionnaire from the University of Mosul's nursing colleges took between fifteen and twenty minutes to complete the interview and respond to the questionnaire. A questionnaire was used to gather data in order to evaluate the nursing students at the University of Mosul's understanding of providing care for the elderly. The study's instruments consisted of two parts, which were as follows: Section One: Demographic Features, comprising (age, class, gender, marital status, and place of residence). Part Two: To evaluate the nursing students' understanding of providing care for the elderly at Mosul University. There were twenty-five multiple-choice questions with three possible answers (Yes, No). The information was gathered from nursing colleges at the University of Mosul. A study instrument was used to collect data. The statistical findings were examined using version 26 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A descriptive methodology was utilized. The demographic description characteristics of the students are computed using percentages and frequencies. The data values were estimated using the means and standard deviation (\pm SD). Utilizing test-retest Pearson coefficient correlation to assess the dependability of the study instruments ⁽¹¹⁻⁵⁸⁾.

Results:

Table (1): Distribution of Demographical Characteristics of sample (100)

Variables	No.	Frequency (%)	Mean +SD
(A): Age			
18 – 20 Years	65	65%	Mean (21.3) SD (1.32)
21 – 23 Years	22	22%	
24 years and more	13	13%	
(B): Sex			
Male	66	66%	
Female	34	34%	
(C): Class			
1 stage	11	11%	
2 stage	12	12%	
3 stage	33	33%	
4 stage	44	44%	
(D): residence			
Urban	79	79%	
Rural	21	21%	
(E): Marital status			
Married	13	13%	
Single	81	81%	
Divorced	6	6%	

Table No. 1 shows that most of the sample participating in the study amounted to 100 nursing students, that most of the study sample was from 18 to 20 years old, at a rate of 65%, and that the

sample of male was higher than that of female by (66%), 79% of the sample whose residence was urban, Most of the sample was unmarried, with a high percentage (%81).

Table (2): Nursing students' knowledge towards care of elderly (N=100)

	knowledge	Yes	No
1	The majority of elderly people aged 65 and over suffer from dementia	33	67
2	The five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell) all tend to weaken in old age	79	21
3	The majority of elderly people have no interest or ability in sexual relations	70	30
4	Lung capacity tends to weaken with age	55	45
5	The majority of elderly people feel hopeless most of the time	74	26
6	Physical strength tends to decrease as age progresses	90	10
7	At least one in ten elderly people live in long-stay institutions such as nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals	13	87
8	Elderly drivers are less likely to have accidents compared to younger drivers	77	33
9	Older workers usually cannot work as actively as young people	62	38
10	More than three-quarters of elderly people are healthy enough to carry out their normal activities	49	51
11	The majority of older people are unable to adapt and change	39	61
12	Older people usually take longer to learn something new	48	52
13	Older people usually take longer to learn something new	80	20
14	Older people tend to react more severely than younger people	95	5
15	In general, older people tend to be more beautiful and gorgeous	35	65
16	In general, older people say that they are rarely bored	72	38
17	The majority of older people are socially isolated	69	31
18	Older workers have fewer accidents than younger workers	60	40
19	More than 20 percent of the world's population is now 65 years or older	88	12
20	The majority of practicing doctors tend to give late priority to the elderly	76	24
21	The majority of older people have incomes below the poverty line, as defined by the United States federal government	67	33
22	The majority of older people work or want to have some type of work to do including housework and volunteer work	97	3
23	Elderly people tend to become more religious as they age	85	15
24	The majority of elderly people say they rarely feel agitated or irritated	57	43
25	The health and economic status of the elderly will be the same or worse in 2020 compared to younger people	50	50

Table No. 2 shows that The majority of older people work or want to have some type of work to do including housework and volunteer work and the most older people tend to react more severely

than younger people. While the results were equal in health and economic status of the elderly will be the same or worse in 2020 compared to younger people

.Table (3): Mean score of regarding knowledge

knowledge	Number (%)	Mean±S.D, Range
Poor (9-15)	55	24.64 ± 1.56
Acceptance (15-19)	33	Range: (9-25)
Good (19-25)	12	

The following table shows that more than half of the sample of the Clint study have weak knowledge about caring for the elderly

Discussion:

Globally, the number of elderly people is rapidly increasing. Knowing what nursing students know about the elderly is important because they will be the people who provide care for the elderly in the future. The purpose of the current study was to clarify what nursing students knew about caring for the elderly. In Iraq, the field of geriatric nursing is still in its infancy. In the undergraduate and graduate nursing curricula, elderly care is not even covered separately. Nursing students are taught about geriatric care in addition to other nursing subjects like advanced nursing practice and community health nursing. There are no dedicated wards or units for the elderly at the hospital where these nursing students receive their nursing practice. Elderly patients are admitted to the wards and receive the same level of care as adult patients. Even so, the study's participants showed a comparatively low degree of understanding regarding the care of the elderly. In contrast, other studies have found that nursing students' mean knowledge scores on aging were 11.13 (46.37%) and 14 (56%) respectively (59). It has also been noted that there is a lack of understanding and interest in the topic of caring for the elderly ^(60, 61). As a result, it has been suggested that the course materials be reviewed and updated to make sure that the attitudes, abilities, and knowledge needed to work with the elderly are given the proper weight and consideration. Table No. 1 indicates that the majority of the study sample consisted of 100

nursing students, that the study sample was primarily between the ages of 18 and 20 (65%), that the male sample was larger than the female sample by 66%, that 79% of the sample lived in an urban area, and that the majority of the sample (81%), as well as the majority of the sample, were single. The Palmore quiz, a multidimensional logic-based scale, was utilized in this study to evaluate participants' knowledge about aging. An in-depth examination of the students' answers on this measure allowed for the perception that knowledge about aging needs to extend beyond biological aspects. Learning about the anthropological, social, and psychological aspects of aging should be a part of the reinforcement of teaching. It is imperative to reconsider curricula and guide the syllabus in order to enhance students' knowledge and prevent bias, stereotyping, and discrimination, as previous studies have also defended ⁽⁶²⁾. Table No. 2 demonstrates that most older people work or wish to work in some capacity, such as cleaning or volunteer work, and that older people typically react more harshly than younger ones. Even though the outcomes for older people's health and economic standing were equal, they will either remain the same or decline in 2020 when compared to younger people. The results of this study, which disagree with research conducted in Saudi Arabia ⁽⁶³⁾ indicate that nursing students possess a reasonable amount of knowledge about the elderly. Because so many students required information about aging, the study found that the respondents' awareness of the topic was low ⁽⁶⁴⁾. Table 3 illustrates that the majority of the Clint study sample had only rudimentary knowledge about taking care of the elderly. The majority of nursing

college students lack access to curriculum materials and books that are specifically designed to address the health needs of the elderly. This is the most prevalent cause, and unlike in developed nations, there is no general specialization in providing care for the elderly.

Conclusion:

The primary findings of this research indicate that a limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size and the use of nursing students from a single university, which hinders the generalizability of the research findings. A larger sample size, however, might yield better results in the future. The findings also show that nursing students in Mosul City, Iraq, have little awareness of the negative effects of older adults.

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