

The identification of the level of knowledge of nurses in the field of hand hygiene through a questionnaire applied within an educational program

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Abstract

Introduction: The level of knowledge on hand hygiene (HH) and healthcare associated infections (HAI) directly influences the practice of HH of medical staff and the rate of HAI. Continuous Medical Education (EMC) is an important way of improving knowledge, increasing compliance with HH and reducing HAI rates. The aim of the study was to evaluate the knowledge of nurses regarding HH and HAI in order to identify their educational needs. *Materials and methods:* In February-June 2018, a study was conducted which included nurses participating in an educational program on HAI management theme. A questionnaire with 25 items from the following 6 specific areas: HAI, HH, disinfection and sterilization, standard precautions and precautions towards the route of transmission, accidental exposure and medical waste management were used to assess the knowledge. *Results:* A total of 236 nurses were included in the study. The average age of the participants was 45.60 ± 11.92 years, and the average work experience was 14.80 ± 13.34 years. The average grade of the group was 8.38 ± 1.03 . This correlated negatively, but weakly and insignificantly, with the age ($r = -0.033$, $p = 0.703$) and the work experience ($r = -0.072$, $p = 0.282$) of the participants. 32.2% of the participants had a very good level of knowledge, but 67.8% had an inadequate level (with satisfactory and good qualifications in the assessment of knowledge). There have been identified 3 important specific areas where nurses have encountered difficulties in identifying the right answer: HAI, HH, disinfection and sterilization. *Conclusions:* 67.8% of nurses have inadequate knowledge of HH and HAI prevention, and 39% of nurses have an insufficient level, which may be a potential barrier to HAI prevention. Identifying specific areas where nurses have knowledge deficits facilitates the development of an EMC strategy centered on the educational needs of nurses.

Keywords:

Nurses; Knowledge; Hand Hygiene; Healthcare Associated Infections; Continuing Medical Education