

Study to Assess the Beliefs, Knowledge and Practices of Post-Secondary Sanitary Schools Students regarding Hand Hygiene

Viorica NEDELICU^{a,b,*}, Mariana ZAZU^a, Doina Carmen MAZILU^{a,b}, Elena IANCU^c, Crin MARCEAN^{b,c}, Corina VERNIC^d and Ioana Marina GRINȚESCU^{b,e}

^a The Order of Nurses, Midwives and Medical Assistants in Romania Bucharest Branch, Avrig Str., no. 12, 021575 Bucharest, Romania

^b “Carol Davila” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Eroii Sanitari Blvd., no. 8, 050474 Bucharest, Romania

^c Fundeni Post-Secondary Sanitary School, Fundeni Str., no. 254, 022328 Bucharest, Romania

^d “Victor Babeș” University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Discipline of Medical Informatics and Biostatistics, Eftimie Murgu Sq., no. 2, 300041 Timișoara, Romania

^e Bucharest Emergency Clinical Hospital, Anesthesia and Intensive Care Unit, Calea Floreasca Str., no. 8, 014461 Bucharest, Romania

E-mails: veranedelcu@yahoo.com; m.zazu@yahoo.com; maz_carmen@yahoo.com;

elenapapari@yahoo.com; marcean.crin@yahoo.com; cvernic@yahoo.com; ioana.grintescu@rospen.ro

* Author to whom correspondence should be addressed

Abstract

Background and Aim: The most important and proven method for preventing and limiting healthcare-associated infections is hand hygiene (HH). However, both the level of knowledge and the beliefs, attitudes and practices of the medical staff are suboptimal. The process of acquiring the knowledge and forming of appropriate HH skills starts from the initial professional training phase and continues through regular training and continuing medical education programs. The aim of the study was to assess the beliefs, knowledge and self-reported practices of post-secondary sanitary schools (PSSS) students regarding HH. *Materials and Methods:* For the purpose of the study, a validated questionnaire with 44 items was used, which was applied to students from a PSSS during October - November 2019. The statistical analysis was performed with the SPSS Statistics 20 program. *Results:* The study included 739 students, 79% female and 16% male, with a mean age of 28.6 ± 8.7 years. The comparative analysis between the average scores of the items showed significant differences between the students in the three years of study in terms of beliefs and practices on HH ($p < 0.01$), except knowledge. Comparisons made according to the sex of the students showed significant differences only for the items related to HH practices ($p < 0.01$), not for the items regarding knowledge or beliefs. In terms of age, it significantly correlated with the scores of the scales for knowledge ($p < 0.01$), beliefs ($p < 0.01$) and practices ($p < 0.05$) regarding HH. The values of correlation coefficients between the scores of knowledge, beliefs and practices scales showed that there is a significant relationship between these three variables ($p < 0.01$). *Conclusions:* The acquisition of an adequate level of knowledge, significantly correlated with the beliefs and self-reported practices of students in PSSS is a good starting point for the development of appropriate HH behaviors of nurses. Future research is needed to compare the HH beliefs, knowledge and practices of students in PSSS, students in nursing faculties and nurses from hospitals.

Keywords: Students; Beliefs; Knowledge; Practices; Hand hygiene