

Awareness Level of Patient's Rights among Hospitalized Patients

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Keywords	Abstract
Awareness Level, Patient's Right, Health Care, Hospitalized Patients.	<i>Although the term "patient rights" is relatively new in the literature and practice of the medical profession, it has emerged to be an essential part of current health care practices. Patients should be somewhat more aware of what to expect from healthcare professionals when they enter into the hospital. To assess the patients' awareness of their rights among those receiving treatment at the Mufti Mehmood Memorial Teaching Hospital in Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design, and sixty patients hospitalized at Mufti Mehmood Memorial Teaching Hospital, Dera Ismail Khan, were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. A self-developed semi-structured questionnaire and face-to-face interviewing methods were utilized to measure the inpatients' awareness level of their rights. The findings of this study indicate that patients had a good level of awareness of their rights. Of the patients, one-fourth (22%) had a strong awareness level, the majority (43%) had an average awareness level, and one-third (35%) had a poor awareness level of their rights. The majority of patients had awareness levels that were poor to average. As a result, more public awareness campaigns about patients' rights ought to be held on a regular basis to inform the community and patients about their rights each time they seek services at a hospital.</i>

INTRODUCTION

The rule of conduct that governs interactions between people of health services and the institutions that provide them is known as the patient right, and it is due from the patient to the state and physicians. 'Patients' right' is a term that has recently been used in health sciences literature and practice, and it is now widely used in the practice of present-day health care. When they visit a hospital, patients are now far more aware of what to expect from the medical staff (Ramadan, 2018). The concept of patient rights was established in accordance with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognized the basic equality and dignity of all people. Since then, a number of declarations and professional codes of ethics have been established in an effort to uphold fundamental human rights and advance the humane treatment of all patients (Gurung & Ghimire, 2020). All human societies unquestionably recognize the inherent rights of every individual as well as their social rights. However, there are particular

rights for the weaker groups in society. Patients are among the most vulnerable social groups in terms of their physical, psychological, social, and economic vulnerabilities. The discipline of health-related interventions and field interaction has grown so much in recent decades due to astounding advancements in medical science, modern treatment, and medical technology techniques that it now poses a significant moral challenge (Ducinskiene et al., 2016).

Owing to a lack of awareness and poor attitudes regarding patient rights, patients rarely have the right to protect their health and obtain the information they require from their healthcare practitioner. Most patients don't know enough about their diseases. Patients showed a lack of awareness of their rights to informed consent before any medical procedure and their responsibility to be properly informed about the nature of the disease with dignity. Healthcare providers disregard patient rights because of their negative attitudes and behaviors that undermine patient rights, which affect patient satisfaction. In addition to understanding the disease, patients should also be aware of their fundamental rights and the possibility for abuses when receiving treatment in a hospital. This will ensure better recovery and quality of care. Both health service providers and patients must actively participate in an effective health system. Patients, doctors, and all other healthcare providers must work together on this issue. The quality of patient treatment and rights depends on appropriate and honest communication, respect for one's personal and profession's values, and sensitivity to differences. The previous findings clearly reflect how insufficiently patients know about their rights. Many patients were unaware of their illness, treatment options, and hospital patient charters. Therefore, access to information about patient rights goes beyond statistics and also helps to guide the system with the objective of assigning sufficient importance to this issue. I was therefore inspired to conduct research on the topic at hand.

Hypothesis

H₁: There will be an association between awareness level regarding patient rights among patients with their selected demographic variables.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies have focused on the awareness level of patients' rights in hospitals. A descriptive study was conducted in 2019 at the Teaching Hospital of Universal College of Medical Sciences, Siddharthanagar -1, Rupandehi, Lumbini province, to ascertain the level of awareness of inpatients' rights. According to Gurung and Sapkota's 2019 study, 59.7% of patients had a high level of awareness about patient rights, while 40.2% had a low level of awareness. Krzych and Ratajczyk designed a study in 2019 to find out how much inpatients at Manipal University Hospital, an academically accredited hospital in Manipal, Karnataka, India, were aware of their rights. The study's findings indicate that more than half of respondents, or 57%, were not aware of their rights, while 23% were aware of something about rights only partially, and the remaining 20% were completely aware of their rights as patients (Krzych & Ratajczyk, 2019). In the same line of thought, another study on the "Rights Charter" was conducted in a few hospitals in the South African province of Limpopo in 2022. The results disclosed that 71% of patients were unaware of the patient rights charter, and 29% had seen

it once but weren't fully aware (Thema & Sumbane, 2022). In a different study, which was carried out in March and April of 2017 among 263 inpatients at Wadi-Medani Teaching Hospital, Sudan, the aim was to evaluate the hospitalized patients' rights awareness and practice among patients at Wad Medani Teaching Hospital, Gezira, Sudan. The study found that 34% of patients had a good awareness level, 49% had an average awareness level, and 17% had a poor awareness level regarding patients' rights (Younis et al., 2017). A 2018 study performed in the inpatient wards of Minia University Hospital, Minia Government, Egypt, revealed that the study's total score for patients' rights was 7.2 ± 2.71 out of 514 (Ramadan et al., 2018). A cross-sectional descriptive study was performed in several wards of the public hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan, between February and May 2018. The purpose of the research was to assess hospitalized patients' awareness level of their legal rights. According to the study's findings, roughly 25% of patients are only aware of their fundamental rights, 35% are somewhat aware of them, and the remaining 40% are not aware of them at all (Muhammad et al., 2021). In 2019, research conducted at two hospitals in Lahore found that 37% of hospitalized patients were aware of their rights, whereas 64% of hospitalized patients were unaware (Tabassum et al., 2019). In the same way, a 2020 study conducted in teaching hospitals in Qom province to compare and ascertain the general levels of awareness regarding inpatients' rights among nurses and patients found that 58.3% of inpatients had good awareness, 39.1% had moderate awareness, and 2.56% had weak awareness (Heidari et al., 2020). In a similar manner, Al-Rebdi et al. (2021) reported that 72.2% of patients were moderately aware of patients' rights, while another 65.3% were unaware of their rights (Al-Rebdi et al., 2021). In the Taif region of Saudi Arabia, in 2019, a cross-sectional survey was conducted among patients who attended the outpatient clinics of five armed forces hospitals. According to survey results, 77% of patients were unaware of their rights, whereas 23% knew some regarding rights (Thakuri, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

To determine inpatients' awareness of their rights, a descriptive cross-sectional study applying a quantitative approach was conducted among hospitalized patients at Mufti Mehmood Memorial Teaching Hospital, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Inpatients at the Mufti Mehmood Memorial Teaching Hospital consisted of the population. The technique of non-probability purposive sampling was employed. There were sixty (60) inpatients in the study's sample. To gather data, a semi-structured questionnaire and face-to-face interviewing methods were used. The questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first section deals with socio-demographic information, while the second half deals with patient rights. The questionnaire's content validity was established by distributing it to professionals in law and related fields and asking them for their opinions and suggestions on each item. The validity of the structured questionnaire's content regarding inpatient rights was assessed using the test-retest method.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In order to measure the level of patient awareness, information was collected from 60 inpatients in the target population. Statistical software was used to clean, enter, and analyze all of the collected data. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. With the use of tables, all the descriptive data was presented in terms of frequency and percentage. The Chi-square test is utilized to determine the association between patients' awareness of their rights

as patients and their socio-demographic characteristics. Based on the study's hypothesis, all of the collected data were examined. The analysis was carried out, arranged, and shown as follows:

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Inpatients based on their Age, Sex, Education Level, Occupation Status, Information Sources and Awareness Level

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age Groups		
20 to 30 Years	12	20
31 to 40 Years	25	41.6
41 to 50 Years	14	23.3
51 & Above Years	9	15
Sex		
Male	29	48.3
Female	31	51.6
Educational Level		
Illiterate	7	11.6
Primary Education	14	23.3
Secondary Education	15	15
Higher Secondary Education	14	23.3
Bachelor & Above	10	16.6
Occupation Status		
Agriculture	11	18.3
Job/Service	35	58.3
Business	14	23.3
Information Sources		
Hospital	12	20
Mass Media	33	55
Family	2	3.3
Peer Group	13	21.6
Awareness Level		
Good Awareness Level	13	21.67
Average Awareness Level	26	43.33
Poor Awareness Level	21	35

Table 1 depicts that the majority of the patients (41.60%) belonged to the 31 to 40 years age group, one-fourth of the patients (23.3%) belonged to the 41 to 50 years age group, less than one-fourth of the patients (20%) belonged to the 20 to 30 years age group, and a few of the patients (15%) belonged to the age group older than 50 years. Out of all of the patients, 51.6% were female, and less than half (48.3%) were male. The data show that the majority of the patients (23.3%) had completed primary and higher secondary education; less than one fourth of the patients (16.6%) and (15%) had completed secondary education and bachelor's and above, respectively; and last but not least, a few (11.6%) were illiterate. In terms of occupation, the majority of patients (58.3%) were engaged in a job/service, one-fourth of the patients (23.3%) were engaged in some business, and less than one-fourth (18.3%) were engaged in agriculture as their occupation. Regarding information sources, the majority of patients (55%) get information from mass media, one-fourth of the patients

(21.6%) and (20%) get information from peer groups and hospitals, respectively, and few patients (3.3%) get information regarding patients' rights from family members. The table further shows that one-third (35%) had a poor awareness level, one-fourth (21.6%) had a good awareness level, and the majority (43%) had the average awareness level.

Table 3: Association of Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Inpatients according to their Awareness Level Regarding Patient's Right

Variables	Level of Awareness			Chi Square χ^2	df	P Value
	Good	Average	Poor			
Age Groups						
20 to 30 Years	2	8	5	2.13	4	0.71
31 to 40 Years	9	8	12			
41 to 50 Years	2	2	1			
51 & Above Years	1	6	3			
Sex						
Male	7	11	12	9.71	4	0.15
Female	5	9	1			
Education Level						
Illiterate	5	2	9	5.38	2	0.06
Primary Education	1	6	9			
Secondary Education	5	10	0			
Higher Secondary Education	4	6	7			
Bachelor Level & Above	2	1	2			
Occupational Status						
Agriculture	2	3	3	4.59	4	0.33
Job/Service	0	1	0			
Business	6	6	10			
Information Sources						
Hospital	0	1	0	2.52	4	0.64
Mass Media	12	14	19			
Family	0	0	2			
Peer Group	0	1	1			

Table 3 shows that none of the variables had an association with the level of awareness regarding patient rights where p -values are more than 0.05. Hence, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is not accepted.

DISCUSSION

When the current study's findings are compared to those of other relevant research. They show similarities. The finding of the present study is similar to the study conducted by Ramadan et al. in 2018 to determine patient awareness of several rights-related topics at Minia University Hospital in Egypt. A related result is in line with a previous study carried out in 2021 by Al-Rebdi et al., which looked at patients' awareness of their rights and the information sources they relied on while they were receiving healthcare at the National Guard Hospital in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. That study revealed that 70% of patients stated that their right to privacy and confidentiality during examinations, procedures, and every stage of their treatment is protected,

and 60% stated that their right is to assist other patients in receiving treatment. The findings of the present research also support a 2019 study by Tabassum et al., which evaluated patients' awareness level of their rights at hospitals in Lahore, Pakistan; this study's findings are identical with the results of the current study. Results of the study indicated that around 71% of patients felt that they should request information verbally and in writing, and approximately 63% said that they had a right to view their medical records pertaining to their diagnosis and procedure for treatments. Furthermore, the findings of the current research are in line with those published by Muhammad et al. in 2021, who aimed to assess hospitalized patients' awareness level of their rights. They found that 39% of patients had a poor knowledge, 22% had a good knowledge, and 39% had an average awareness level of their rights.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusions were drawn in light of the study's findings. According to this study, inpatients' levels of awareness regarding their rights were as follows: 35% had poor awareness, 21.6% had good awareness, and 43.3% had moderate awareness. The study applied the chi-square test to examine the association between awareness and the demographic variables that were chosen, including age, sex, level of education, occupation, and information source. There was not a significant association found among the demographic characteristics.

In general, patients' awareness level of their rights is average. The study reached the conclusion that education initiatives are necessary to help health professionals and patients understand and uphold the fundamental standards of patient rights.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a sufficient awareness level about patients' rights be created in light of the study that has been done. It is possible to carry out similar research with different hospitals. To evaluate patients' awareness of their rights, more comparative research studies can be conducted. More research can be done to cover all aspects of patient rights awareness.

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