



Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and Educational Needs Regarding Caring for Patients with Hepatitis B and C Among Healthcare Students: A Qualitative Study

Presenting Author: Al Muntasir Al Riyami¹

Co-Authors: AL Zaabi O¹, Al Riyami A¹, Joseph M², Al Salmi A¹, Al Fahdi L¹, Al Kaabi O¹, Aal Abdulsalam A¹ and Al Aamri D³

Affiliation: ¹Department of Adult Health and Critical Care, College of Nursing, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman, Alzaabi@squ.edu.om

²Department of Fundamentals and Administration, College of Nursing, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman

³Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, Muscat, Oman

Introduction

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infections are serious global public health concerns and leading causes of acute and chronic hepatitis, liver cirrhosis, and hepatocellular carcinoma. Healthcare students must demonstrate good knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) when caring for patients with HBV and HCV. However, few studies have assessed these factors among nursing and medical students.

Methods

This qualitative descriptive study explored the KAP and educational needs of medical and nursing students regarding the care of patients with HBV and HCV. A total of 60 students enrolled in clinical courses at a major public university in Oman were invited to participate in ten focus group discussions and thirteen individual interviews, selected through a convenience sampling approach. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results

Four main themes were identified: (1) lack of knowledge about caring for patients with HBV and HCV, (2) attitudes toward caring for patients with HBV and HCV, (3) willingness toward caring for patients with HBV and HCV, and (4) the need for training in HBV and HCV care. The majority of students reported insufficient knowledge about HBV and HCV, including their transmission, treatment, and prevention. Participants also exhibited negative attitudes and poor practices in caring for patients with HBV and HCV. However, students expressed a willingness to care for patients with HBV and HCV and highlighted the need for enhanced training on HBV and HCV within their curriculum.



"We have been taught the basics, but we need to stay updated with the latest research, treatment guidelines, and best practices in managing HBV and HCV." (Medical female student)



"I think my knowledge is limited because I only learned from theory. I didn't get clinical experience with HBV or HCV patients, which makes it hard to apply what I learned." (nursing male student)



It's important to make sure that these patients don't feel stigmatized because of their condition." (Medical female student)



"I believe that patients with HCV and HBV deserve to be treated with the same respect and care as any other patient. We should not isolate them or discriminate based on their diagnosis." (Nursing male student)

Conclusion: This study highlights the inadequate awareness of HBV and HCV infections among healthcare students. The findings underscore the need to enhance both theoretical and practical training for future healthcare professionals, focusing on reducing stigma and improving infection control practices in caring for patients with HBV and HCV. Strengthening these areas is essential for eliminating HBV and HCV infections.