

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

**AL Zaabi O<sup>1</sup>**, Al Riyami A<sup>1</sup>, Joseph M<sup>2</sup>, Al Salmi A<sup>1</sup>, Al Fahdi L<sup>1</sup>, Al Kaabi O<sup>1</sup>, Aal Abdulsalam A<sup>1</sup> and Al Aamri D<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Adult Health and Critical Care, College of Nursing, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman, Alzaabi@squ.edu.om; Alzaabi8@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Fundamentals and Administration, College of Nursing, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman

<sup>3</sup>Sultan 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.

**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.

**Keywords:** *Hepatitis C, Hepatitis B, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Healthcare students.*

### **Disclosure of Interest Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

### **Acknowledgments**

All authors contributed to finalizing the manuscript. The authors do not have any financial or nonfinancial competing interests for this review. Acknowledgement is given to Dr. Omar Al Zaabi (Primary Supervisor) and Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), who supported this study. We also thank the medical and nursing students who participated in this study.

### **Human subjects approval statement**

Ethical approval was obtained from the Deanship of Research and the Ethical Committee of the College of Nursing at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU).

**Funding Sources:** This work was supported by the Ministry of Higher Education, Oman (Grant Number: RC/URG-CON/AHCC/24/01).

### **References:**

- World Health Organization (WHO). (2024a, April 9). *Hepatitis B: Key Facts*. Retrieved February 1, 2025, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hepatitis-b>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2024b, April 9). *Hepatitis C: Key Facts*. Retrieved February 1, 2025, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hepatitis-c>