

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices among Nurses Toward Caring for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Acute Care Settings in Oman: A National Study

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Introduction:

HIV/AIDS continues to pose a significant global public health challenge, including in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. However, insufficient HIV/AIDS knowledge among nurses can potentially compromise the quality of care provided to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), leading to stigmatising attitudes and inconsistent adherence to universal precautions.

Method:

This cross-sectional study aimed to examine knowledge, attitudes, and practices among nurses toward caring for PLWHA. A total of 563 nurses from five major governmental hospitals located across four governorates in Oman completed a paper-based self-administered questionnaire, using a convenience sampling approach.

Results:

Nurses' HIV/AIDS knowledge was found to be unsatisfactory, with a mean total score of 14.30 out of 28 (SD = 3.75). However, it was positively associated with factors such as older age, greater years of experience, higher educational level, and prior HIV/AIDS training ($p < 0.001$). While nurses demonstrated moderate attitudes ($M = 34.60$ out of 50, $SD = 4.73$) toward caring for PLWHA, 71.4% were worried about contracting HIV/AIDS from caring for PLWHA and 41.7% believed that PLWHA should be isolated from other patients. Additionally, the majority of nurses (64.8%) reported rarely or never providing care for PLWHA. The study revealed significant positive linear correlations between knowledge-practice ($r = 0.284$, $p < 0.001$), knowledge-attitude ($r = 0.254$, $p < 0.001$), and attitude-practice ($r = 0.97$, $p < 0.02$) regarding caring for PLWHA. Furthermore, 80.3% had not received any HIV/AIDS training, and 68.4% wanted to attend HIV/AIDS training programs.

Conclusion:

This study highlights the unsatisfactory HIV/AIDS knowledge and the need for HIV/AIDS training. It also reveals that improving HIV/AIDS knowledge can lead to better attitudes and practices toward caring for PLWHA. These findings provide implications for developing HIV/AIDS educational policies to improve the quality of care provided for PLWHA and ultimately achieve HIV/AIDS elimination in the MENA region.

Keywords: Nurses, HIV/AIDS, knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, PLWHA, HIV/AIDS elimination.

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. This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. Acknowledgement is given to Dr. Omar Al Zaabi (Primary Supervisor) and Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), who supported this study. We also thank the nurses who participated in this study.

Human subjects approval statement

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