



ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERSONAL HABITS AND HYGIENE BEHAVIOR OF STUDENTS ENTERING NURSING EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Nurses constitute the largest percentage of the health care workers (HCW). They spend more time with patients and their compliance with hygiene practices is vital in preventing the disease transmission. It is imperative to know the nursing students' behavior on personal habits and hygiene before being exposed to the patients during their nursing training. This study was conducted to assess the personal habits and hygiene behavior of first year BSc nursing students prior to their exposure to the patients. **Methods:** A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted at School of Nursing of Chitwan Medical College in March-April 2015. All 30 students of first year Bachelor of nursing in Science were included in the study. Validated self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 16. **Results:** Almost all used to wash their hairs every few days. More than 50% used to wash their hands after using handkerchief. Nearly 77% agreed to have complete bath or shower daily. Forty seven percent used to wash their hands 1-4 times a day. Nearly 77% used to change their shirt every few days and nearly 84% used change their trouser every few days. Majority of the students used to wear tie most of the times and change with clean every week. Nearly 67% used to change their socks every few days. None of them had any objection for getting vaccinated. **Conclusion:** The findings might reflect the prevalent practices in teenage girl students. There seems to be some gaps in health hygiene behavior among students entering into nursing education.

Key words: Healthcare worker, Nepal, Nursing students, Personal habits, Personal hygiene, Teenage girls

INTRODUCTION

Hygiene is a highly personal matter determined by individual values and practices. It is influenced by culture, social, familial and individual factors, as well as by the person's knowledge of health and hygiene. Hygiene behavior includes general hygiene, household hygiene, food related hygiene, hand hygiene and personal hygiene.^{1,2,3}

Poor hygiene practices and inadequate sanitary conditions play major roles in the increased burden of communicable diseases in developing countries. A large fraction of the world's illness and death is attributed to communicable diseases. Poor hygiene is one of the important and critical behavioral risk factors contributing to the global burden of diseases.^{1,2,3,4,5}

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies the transmission of healthcare associated infections (HAIs) by healthcare providers (HCPs) to be a major concern and apprehension for patient safety and care. WHO recommends surveillance and prevention of HAIs to be a priority in healthcare settings worldwide.^{6,7,8,9}

Nurses constitute the largest proportion of the health care workers (HCW) and they are the "nucleus of the health care system". They spend more time with patients than any other HCWs, their compliance with hygiene practices guidelines seems to be more vital and imperative in preventing the disease transmission among patients.¹⁰

In Nepal, there is no study has been conducted on the personal habits and hygiene behavior of students entering nursing education. This study aimed to assess the personal habits and hygiene behavior of students entering nursing education. The objective of this study was to assess the personal habits and hygiene behavior of first year Bachelor of nursing in Science (BSc) students prior to their exposure to the patients.

METHODS

This was cross sectional descriptive study, conducted in School of Nursing, Chitwan Medical College, Bharatpur, Nepal during March-April 2015. The first-year students of Bachelor of Science (BSc.) in nursing participated in the study with consent. Purposive sampling technique was used. All newly enrolled thirty students included in the study. The self-administered validated questionnaire was used for collection of data. The questionnaire was prepared and used in survey in 2014 by Dr. John Ferguson, Infectious Diseases Physician, John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, Hunter New England Health and Microbiologist, Pathology North, NSW, Conjoint Associate Professor, University of Newcastle Australia. He permitted us to use the questionnaire for study during his visit to Chitwan Medical College in 2015.

Data was analyzed using SPSS 20.0 version.

RESULTS

The findings are mentioned in tables as responses of nursing students to each question of questionnaire.

1. How often do you wash your hair? (Table: 1)

Response	Number	Percent
Daily	0	0
Every few days	29	96.7
Every week	01	03.3
Every month	0	0
Less frequently than above	0	0

2. Do you clean your hands after using a handkerchief or tissue? (Table: 2)

Response	Number	Percent
Almost never	7	23.4
Sometimes	16	53.4
Most of the time	04	13.3
Nearly always	01	03.3
I don't use either of these!	02	06.6

3. Thinking about the learning you bring from life and your family, is it essential, desirable or not necessary to have a complete shower or bath each day? (Table: 3)

Response	Number	Percent
Essential	23	76.7
Desirable	06	20.0
Not necessary	01	03.3
Other (Please Specify)	-	-

4. How many times per day, on average, would you clean your hands? (Table: 4)

Response	Number	Percent
< 1	13	43.3
1-4	14	46.7
5-10	0	0
11-15	02	06.7
16-20	0	0
> 20	01	03.3

5. How often do you change your shirt or blouse? (Table: 5)

Response	Number	Percent
Wear a clean one every day	05	16.7
Change it very few days	23	76.7
Change it every week	01	03.3
Change it when it starts to smell	0	0
Change it when it is visibly dirty or marked	01	03.3

6. Usually, how often would you change into clean trousers/skirt? (Table: 6)

Response	Number	Percent
Daily	01	03.3
Every few days	25	83.4
Every week	04	13.3
Every month	0	0
Every 2-6 months	0	0
Every 7-12 months	0	0
When visibly dirty or marked	0	0

7. Do you wear a neck tie in a College? (Table: 7)

Response	Number	Percent
Most of the time	28	93.3
Often	0	0
Sometimes	04	06.7
Occasionally	0	0
Virtually never	0	0

8. Tie wearers- How often do you wear a clean tie? (Table: 8)

Response	Number	Percent
Every day	05	16.7
Every week	22	73.3
Every month	02	06.7
Every year	0	0
When it gets visibly dirty or marked	1	03.3
When it starts to smell	0	0
Virtually never	0	0

9. Usually, how often would you change into clean trousers/skirt? (Table: 6)

Response	Number	Percent
Usually don't wear socks	0	0
Change them every day	09	30.0
Every few days	17	56.6
Every week	0	0
Every month	0	0
When they start to smell	02	06.7
When they become visibly dirty or marked	02	06.7

10. Do you have personal objections of some kind about accepting any immunization to prevent infectious disease? (Table:10)

Response	Number	Percent
No	30	100
Yes	0	0

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION:

Good personal hygiene is a significant barrier to many infectious diseases, and it promotes better health and well-being of an individual and community. Various studies have revealed that good quality hygiene practices provide a simple and cost-effective means for preventing the spread of infection in the community.^{11,12}

Furthermore, it's mandatory for the students who join health professions education learn and adopt state of art personal hygiene practices and modify their hygiene behavior as they play a critical role in preventing healthcare associated infections (HAIs).¹⁰

This study was done to assess the personal habits and hygiene behavior of first year BSc nursing students prior to their exposure to the patients. This study is first of its kind done in Nepal. The findings this study might reflect the prevalent practices in teenage girls in Nepal.

Almost all used to wash their hairs every few days. More than 50% used to wash their hands after using handkerchief. Nearly 77% agreed to have complete bath or shower daily. Forty seven percent used to wash their hands 1-4 times a day. Nearly 77% used to change their shirt every few days and nearly 84% used change their trouser every few days. Majority of the students used to wear tie most of the times and change with clean one every week. Nearly 67% used to change their socks every few days. None of them had any objection for getting vaccinated.

It's well-known fact that in nosocomial infection, transmission of pathogen microbes may occur to patients through doctors, nurses and paramedical staff, through direct or indirect contact with patients via utensils, furniture, doctors' coats, stethoscopes, pens, and necktie.^{13,14}

There seems to be some gaps in health hygiene behavior among teenage students entering into nursing education in Nepal. The study done in Kuwait by Al-Rifaai et al on hygiene practice among science and nursing students focused light on the aspect of personal hygiene and behavior and identified gaps in hygiene knowledge and practices by college students when they go to the health workforce.²

It is recommended to orient nursing students prior to their exposure to patient about importance of health hygiene behavior and practices.

This will improvise the health hygiene behavior of nursing students as they are the focal person who comes in close contact of the patient, which later would help to reduce transmission of infectious diseases.

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