

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Effect of Education on the Knowledge and Practice of Emergency Department's Nurses Regarding the Patients' Triage

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Abstract

Introduction: Emergency department as one of the most important wards of the hospital confronts with lots of referring patients. Timely service presentation in this ward depends on efficient and effective functions of its personnel. Thus, this study was aimed to evaluate the effect of education on the knowledge and practice of emergency department's nurses in the patients' triage field. **Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, the knowledge and practice of 50 nurses was evaluated before and after of 9 hours educational workshop regarding patients' triage based on the emergency severity index (ESI). Persons who had at least six months work experience in the emergency department and did not participate in any triage workshop during the six years before starting the project were entered to the study. Data gathering was performed through preparing three questionnaires separately included demographic information as well as assessment of knowledge and practice. Evaluated demographic characteristics were age, gender, marital status, work history, academic degree, type of employment, work shift, and average of work shift weekly. To assess the knowledge and practice, two separate questionnaires were used that their reliability and validity were confirmed before. Data was analyzed using SPSS 16 and appropriate analytic tests. $P < 0.05$ was considered as statistically significant. **Results:** The average knowledge scores of nurses reached from 7.5 ± 2.1 to 14 ± 1.6 ($p = 0.001$, $r = 0.49$) after education. Also the average scores of participants increased from 31.8 ± 9.9 to 69.7 ± 8.1 ($p = 0.001$, $r = 0.87$). There was no significant relationship between characteristics of nurses and their knowledge scores in six weeks after education ($p > 0.05$). While it was seen between the work history of nursing ($p = 0.038$), working in emergency department ($p = 0.001$), as well as type of employment ($p = 0.019$) and average scores of practice within six weeks after education. No significant relation was seen between academic degree, marital status, and gender of participants and average scores of knowledge and practice during six weeks after finishing the educational workshop. **Conclusion:** It seems that education has a positive effect on increasing the knowledge and practice of emergency department's nurses regarding the triage of patients by ESI. Therefore, expanding the theoretical and practical courses of education is essential to improve the knowledge and quality of service presentation.

Key words: Nursing education research; health knowledge, attitudes, practice; triage; emergency medicine

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