



## A STUDY TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STRUCTURED TEACHING PROGRAM ON KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MEDICO-LEGAL ASPECTS IN CARE OF PATIENTS AMONG NURSING OFFICERS IN SELECTED HOSPITALS AT CHITRADURGA

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### ABSTRACT

Medico-legal knowledge is integral component of nursing practice, ensuring safe patient care while safeguarding healthcare professionals against legal complications. Inadequate awareness of legal responsibilities may lead to negligence, ethical violations, and increased medico-legal cases. The present research is aimed to assess the effectiveness of a Structured Teaching Program (STP) on knowledge regarding medico-legal aspects in patient care among nursing officers.

A quantitative research approach with a quasi-experimental post-test control group design was used here. The study was conducted at Basaveshwara Medical College and Hospital, Chitradurga, with a sample of 60 nursing officers (30 in experimental and 30 in control group), selected through non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured knowledge questionnaire.

The findings shows a significant improvement in knowledge scores in the experimental group after administration of the structured teaching program ( $t = 19.64, p < 0.05$ ). Additionally, a statistically significant difference was observed between the experimental and control groups in post-test scores ( $t = 26.04, p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that the structured teaching program was highly effective in increasing knowledge regarding medico-legal aspects among nursing officers.

**Key Words:** Medico -legal aspects, structured Teaching Program (STP), Nursing officers, Nursing education, Patient care, Knowledge assessment.

### INTRODUCTION

In this modern era nurses have multi – function in their work setting. There is job uncertainty so in that situation, nurses or professional workers must know the law and legal issues that can help them in day to day working or their patient care. Also, in this ambitious world and advanced technology nurses have multiple and expanded roles to render high quality nursing care. Nurses should have good knowledge about legal issues, ethical and professional roles, and nursing regulatory mechanism for to avoid legal suits and to protect patients. So, nursing officers need to improve the knowledge in regards to legal principles and incorporate the knowledge in decision making in daily practice.

The healthcare system is rapidly evolving, with increasing complexity in patient care, technological advancements, and heightened awareness of patient rights. In this dynamic environment, nurses are expected not only to provide clinical care but also to adhere strictly to legal and ethical standards. Medico-legal issues have become increasingly prominent due to rising litigation, consumer protection awareness, and accountability in healthcare services.

Nursing officers serve as the backbone of the healthcare system and are often the primary caregivers in hospitals. Their actions, decisions, and documentation directly influence patient outcomes as well as legal accountability. Any lapse in knowledge related to legal responsibilities—such as informed consent, negligence, documentation, patient rights, and confidentiality—can result in serious consequences including lawsuits, professional misconduct charges, and loss of credibility.

In India, the inclusion of healthcare services under consumer protection laws has further increased the need for legal awareness among healthcare professionals. Nurses must be well-equipped with medico-legal knowledge to ensure safe practice and protect themselves from legal risks.



Educational interventions, especially structured teaching programs, have been identified as effective strategies for improving knowledge and competence among healthcare professionals. Such programs provide systematic and comprehensive learning experiences, enhancing both theoretical understanding and practical application. Therefore, this study was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured teaching program in improving knowledge regarding medico-legal aspects in patient care among nursing officers.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Medico-legal knowledge plays a vital role in ensuring safe and legally sound nursing practice. Nurses are required to maintain proper documentation, obtain informed consent, and adhere to ethical and legal standards in patient care. However, several studies have identified gaps in knowledge among nursing professionals.

A study by Saraswathi and Jose (2023) found that nurses had only moderate knowledge regarding medico-legal records, particularly in areas related to documentation and legal procedures. Similarly, Ramya and Kurian (2017) reported that nurses working in specialized units demonstrated inadequate knowledge of medico-legal aspects, indicating the need for continuous professional education.

Alphonsa et al. (2020) observed that staff nurses had limited awareness of ethico-legal aspects such as patient rights and negligence. In line with these findings, Dias (2022) highlighted that although nurses possessed basic knowledge, they lacked confidence in applying medico-legal principles in clinical settings.

Educational interventions have been shown to be effective in improving knowledge. Bharadwaj (2019) demonstrated that a self-instructional module significantly enhanced nurses' knowledge regarding medico-legal aspects, supporting the importance of structured teaching programs.

The issue is not limited to nursing alone. Nath et al. (2022) identified insufficient medico-legal knowledge among medical practitioners, while Singh et al. (2019) reported gaps in knowledge, attitudes, and practices among healthcare professionals. These findings suggest a widespread need for systematic training in medico-legal aspects across healthcare disciplines.

So, the literature indicates that although healthcare professionals are aware of medico-legal concepts, their knowledge is often inadequate for practical application. Structured educational interventions are effective in addressing these gaps, thereby justifying the need for the present research.

## OBJECTIVES:

1. To assess the pretest knowledge regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients in experimental group.
2. To assess the post-test knowledge regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients in experimental group.
3. To assess the effectiveness of structured teaching program by comparing the pre – test and post – test knowledge scores in experimental group.
4. To assess the effectiveness of post – test knowledge scores regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients in control group.
5. To determine the effectiveness of structured teaching program by comparing the post-test knowledge scores between experimental group and control group.
6. To find the association between the post – test knowledge scores of experimental groups with demographic variables.

## HYPOTHESES

- **H1:** There is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores in the experimental group
- **H2:** There is a significant difference between post-test knowledge scores of experimental and control groups
- **H3:** There is a significant association between post-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- **Effectiveness:** Improvement in knowledge scores after the structured teaching program
- **Structured Teaching Program (STP):** Planned instructional intervention on medico-legal aspects
- **Medico-legal Aspects:** Legal responsibilities related to patient care including consent, negligence, documentation, and patient rights
- **Nursing Officers:** Registered nurses working in hospital settings

## Conceptual Framework

The present study aims in assessing the knowledge regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients among nursing officers in Basaveshwara Meical College and Hospital at Chitradurga. The conceptual model for the study



is based on Imogene King Goal Attainment Theory. Imogene King explains the concept of the nurses and patient mutually communicating information, establishing goal and taking action to attain goals.

### METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with 60 samples out of which 30 in experimental group and 30 in control group in quantitative research approach, Quasi – experimental post-test only control group design and sample selection was done by non – probability convenient sampling technique. Pre – existing knowledge was assessed by using structured questionnaires. After the pre – test, structured teaching program was given regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients. After 7 days post – test was conducted by using same tool, and the post- test was conducted to control group by using the same tool.

### Tool Description

The structured questionnaire consisted of two sections:

**SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES (AGE, GENDER, QUALIFICATION, EXPERIENCE, ETC.)**

**SECTION II: KNOWLEDGE QUESTIONNAIRE (30 MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS)**

### Validity and Reliability

- Content validity established by experts in nursing and medico-legal field
- Reliability tested using appropriate statistical method (e.g., split-half / Cronbach’s alpha)
- Tool found to be reliable for data collection

### Procedure for Data Collection

- Permission obtained from institutional authorities
- Informed consent taken from participants
- Pre-test conducted in experimental group
- Structured teaching program administered
- Post-test conducted after 7 days in both groups

### Ethical Considerations

- Ethical clearance obtained from institutional ethics committee
- Informed consent ensured
- Confidentiality maintained
- Participation was voluntary
- No harm caused to participants

### RESULTS

**Table 1: Distribution of Knowledge Levels among Nursing Officers**

Group	Knowledge Level	Frequency (%)
<b>Experimental Group (Pre-test)</b>	Inadequate	66.7%
	Moderate	33.3%
	Adequate	0%
<b>Experimental Group (Post-test)</b>	Inadequate	0%
	Moderate	43.3%
	Adequate	56.7%
<b>Control Group (Post-test)</b>	Inadequate	63.3%
	Moderate	36.7%
	Adequate	0%

**Table 2: Comparison of Mean Knowledge Scores (Experimental Group)**

Variable	Mean Score	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Significance
Pre-test	12.57	10.10	19.64	< 0.05	Significant
Post-test	22.67				

**Table 3: Comparison of Post-test Knowledge Scores between Experimental and Control Groups**

Group	Mean Score	Mean Difference	t-value	p-value	Significance
Experimental	22.67	8.74	26.04	< 0.05	Significant
Control	13.93				



**Table 4: Association between Post-test Knowledge and Demographic Variables**

Demographic Variables	Association	Significance
Gender	Significant	p < 0.05
Professional Qualification	Significant	p < 0.05
Marital Status	Significant	p < 0.05
Type of Family	Significant	p < 0.05
Professional Experience	Significant	p < 0.05
Age	Not Significant	p > 0.05
Family Income	Not Significant	p > 0.05
Working Area	Not Significant	p > 0.05
Source of Information	Not Significant	p > 0.05

### DISCUSSION

The present study findings clearly demonstrate that the structured teaching program (STP) had a significant impact on improving the knowledge of nursing officers regarding medico-legal aspects in patient care.

In the experimental group, the pre-test results revealed that a majority (66.7%) of nursing officers had inadequate knowledge, indicating a substantial gap in medico-legal awareness prior to the intervention. However, after the implementation of the structured teaching program, there was a marked improvement, with 56.7% of participants achieving adequate knowledge levels and none remaining in the inadequate category. This highlights the effectiveness of structured and systematic educational interventions.

In contrast, the control group continued to show a high percentage (63.3%) of inadequate knowledge in the post-test, emphasizing that routine exposure without structured teaching is insufficient to improve medico-legal understanding.

The statistical analysis further supports these findings. The significant increase in mean knowledge scores in the experimental group ( $t = 19.64, p < 0.05$ ) confirms that the improvement was not due to chance. Additionally, the comparison between experimental and control groups ( $t = 26.04, p < 0.05$ ) reinforces the effectiveness of the teaching program.

The association between knowledge scores and demographic variables such as gender, qualification, and experience suggests that professional exposure and educational background may influence learning outcomes. However, the lack of association with age and income indicates that knowledge improvement is primarily dependent on educational intervention rather than personal characteristics.

Overall, the study findings are consistent with similar research studies, which emphasize that structured teaching programs are highly effective in enhancing professional knowledge and competency among nursing personnel.

### INTERPRETATION

The findings of the study revealed that there will be significant difference between pre – test and post – test knowledge scores regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients among nursing officers in experimental group. The mean post – test knowledge score was higher than the mean pre – test knowledge scores. There was significant improvement in knowledge after the structured teaching program among nursing officers. And there will be significant difference between in post – test knowledge scores regarding medico legal aspects in care of patients among nursing officers between experimental group and control group. It can be concluded that structured teaching program was effective in improving the knowledge of nursing officers therefore, H<sub>1</sub> is accepted. There will be significant difference between in post test knowledge scores of experimental group and control group therefore, H<sub>2</sub> is accepted and there will be significant association between post – test knowledge scores in experimental group with selected demographic variables therefore, H<sub>3</sub> is accepted.

### CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the structured teaching program was highly effective in improving knowledge regarding medico-legal aspects in patient care among nursing officers. The findings highlight the importance of continuous professional education to enhance legal awareness, ensure patient safety, and protect healthcare professionals from legal risks.



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