



Health Management Student's Knowledge about Patient Rights in Public Universities in Turkey

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Authors NM, SB, MT, MD and HHT designed the study, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors NM, AR and HHT managed the literature searches, analyses of the study and performed the spectroscopy analysis. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Background: It is important for health care managers to understand patient rights before making an important health care related decision. Aim of the study was to assess health management student's knowledge on patient's rights in public universities in Turkey.

Materials and Methods: A survey was conducted among undergraduate health management students enrolled in three public universities in Turkey. Data was collected using self-administered questionnaire on patient rights. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study participants. Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis Test were used to identify a relationship between knowledge and other factors.

Results: Total 400 students from health management department from three different public universities participated in this study. The participants' mean age was 20.97± 1.68 years old

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(range, 18-32 years). 59% of students were male and 41% of them were female. The results showed there were not significantly different in knowledge score between genders ($P=0.064$). There were statistically significant differences in terms of knowledge score for different year of study groups ($P=0.002$) also there was a statistically significant difference in Knowledge score for students from different university ($P=0.000$).

Conclusion: In general, 65% of respondents had good level of knowledge while 35% of them had bad knowledge about patient rights. More than half of the students have good knowledge among the patient rights; the knowledge score is different among the senior and junior students and among universities.

Keywords: Patient rights; ethics; health management; university students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Patients' rights vary in different countries and in different jurisdictions, often depending upon prevailing cultural and social norms [1]. The issue of patients' rights is relatively unknown in Turkey but it is often recalled when there is an incident of death or disability suspected to be caused by physician error. However, patients' rights are being violated thousands of times every day in the country. More than these patient rights' violations, the essential point is the lack of a mechanism to claim those rights and to complain about the practices which violate them. In Turkey, patients and their relatives are uninformed, powerless and unprotected against physicians and health organizations, and they typically accept whatever happens to them with patience [2]. In Turkey, the first legislation related to patient's rights, "The Regulation of Patients' Rights" (RPR), was enacted in 1998. Although there is clear knowledge about what the patient's rights are, the responsibilities of health institutions and professionals regarding this subject as well as the way of implementing these rights are not clear. Thus, "the directive for practice of patient's rights" [3] was issued in 2005 to practice, enhance, and standardize patient's rights. The RPR was recently updated on May 8, 2014 [4], which stated that the rights of vulnerable patient groups would be further protected in our country by future legislation [5]. It is important for health care managers to understand patient rights before making an important health care related decision. Health management students are candidate for future health care managers at different level in healthcare institutes due to this reason, the health management students must have good knowledge on patient rights, this makes us to conduct a study among health management students. There are some studies were conducted among medical and nursing students on patient's rights in Turkey however there is no

study done among health management students to determine their knowledge on patient's rights. The Aim of the study was to assess health management student's knowledge on patient's rights in public universities in Turkey.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was carried out among the health management undergraduate students in three public universities in Turkey. The universities are the Necmettin Erbakan University in Konya province, Afyon Kocatepe University in Afyon and Suleyman Demirel University in Isparta Province of Turkey. The data were collected from 400 undergraduate health management student from three different universities. Students who agreed to participate were asked to complete a set of questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the students at the end of their scheduled class sessions. The questionnaires were completed in class and took an average of fifteen minutes to complete. The completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately after the sessions.

This is a self-administered questionnaire which comprised of two parts. First part related to respondent's socio-demographic background and second part on knowledge related to patient's rights. The questions on knowledge had fifteen items, the questionnaire was adopted from previous study [6]. Prior to the survey, the questionnaire was pre-tested to assess its clarity, sequencing and time needed to complete. Pre-test of questionnaire was done on thirty respondents who were chosen to ensure that the questions are easily understood. The result of the pre-test was used to improve the phrasing of questions in the questionnaire. Questionnaire validation tests showed that the Alpha Cronbach was 0.82 for knowledge related patient's rights. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study participants. Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal

Wallis Test were used to identify a relationship between knowledge and other factors Ethical consideration.

We have obtained approval from the faculties from each universities to conduct the study. Prior to data collection, all study participants were given information on the study. All respondents signed the informed consent form before participation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For this study, 400 students from health management departments from three different university participated. The participants' mean age was 20.97± 1.68 years old (range, 18-32 years). More than half of the students (59%) were male and 41% of them were female. Most of the students (85.3%) were resident in Urban area and the rest from Rural area. In terms of university 12.5% from Necmettin Erbakan University, 37.5% from Afyon Kocatepe and 50% from Suleyman Demirel University. Only 12.5% was in 4th year of study, followed by 26.5% in first year of study, 28.5% 2nd year of study and finally 32.8% were in 3rd year of the study.

Among the 400 students who participated in this study, the study results showed that, in general, students in health management field had good knowledge level related patients' right, where 65% of respondents had good level of knowledge. In this study the average score was

9.97 ± 1.65 with a minimum score of 2 and up to 14 out of 15.

Students' opinion about patient's rights are show. In Table 1. In total, 97.8% of the students agree that healthcare is a right, that" Patients have the right to identify, choose and change their healthcare personnel" (94.3%), and that "Before any treatment or intervention patients should be informed and give their consent" (94%). In addition, 93.3% agreed that Patients have a right to see their own laboratory results and medical records.

Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to compare the knowledge score between females and males. The result showed there were not significantly different in Knowledge score between genders (*P* =0.064).

A Kruskal Wallis Test was conducted to explore the impact of Year of study on Knowledge score. Subjected were divided into four groups (1year, 2 year, 3 year, 4year of study). There were statistically significant differences in terms of knowledge score for different Year of study groups (*P* =0.002). Post hoc comparison using Tukey Test indicated mean knowledge score of first Year of study group was significantly different from 3rd Year of study group. Also mean knowledge score of second Year of study group was significantly different from 3rd Year of study group We did not find any significantly difference in knowledge score in the other groups.

Table 1. Awareness of Health management students on patient's rights

Patients' right which agreed by participants	No (%)
Health care is a right	391 (97.8)
Patients have the right to identify, choose and change their healthcare personnel	377(94.3)
Patients should be fully informed about their status (including bad news)	314(78.5)
Before any treatment or intervention patients should be informed and give their consent	376(94)
Patients have the right to die	104(26)
Even if it causes death, a conscious patient has the right to refuse treatment	237(59.3)
Upon the terminally ill patient's request, nurses and physicians should be allowed to end life	134(33.5)
After your death, you will donate your organs	312(78)
The patient has right to permit the use of body after death	223(55.8)
Newborns with severe disabilities should be allowed to die	82(20.5)
Children should agree with decisions about their treatment after seven years of age	187(46.8)
"Quality of life" standards should be used to determine if treatment continues	258(64.5)
Patients have a right to see their own laboratory results and medical records	373(93.3)
The patient' information can be shared with relatives with the permission of the patient	352(88)
The patient's information should remain confidential after death	348(87)

Table 2. The association between demographic factors and knowledge on patient's rights

Grouping Item	Group	Total knowledge score		P-value *
		Mean	Std. deviation	
Gender	Male (236)	10.08	1.69	0.064
	Female (164)	9.82	1.60	
Year of study	1 Year (105)	9.7	1.94	0.002*
	2 Year (114)	9.79	1.39	
	3 Year (131)	10.3	1.4	
	4 Year (50)	10.24	1.98	
University	Necmettin Erbakan (50)	10.66	1.39	0.000*
	Suleyman Demirel (200)	9.49	1.63	
	Afyon Kocatepe (150)	10.38	1.59	

A Kruskal Wallis Test was conducted to compare Knowledge score between of students from different university. There was a statistically significant difference in Knowledge score for students from different university ($P= 0.000$). Post hoc comparison using Tukey Test indicated mean knowledge score of students from Necmettin Erbakan University was significantly higher than students from Suleyman Demirel University. Also mean knowledge score of students from Suleyman Demirel University was significantly lower than students from Afyon Kocatepe University. We did not find any significantly difference in knowledge score between students from Necmettin Erbakan University and students from Afyon Kocatepe University.

We conducted this study to fill the gap and find out the health management student's knowledge level on the patient's rights. Arab [7] conducted a study among hospital managers of private hospitals in Iran and the study found that only 23% of hospital managers had good level of awareness on patient's rights. The findings of current study were higher (65 %) than the Arab's [7] findings, but nowadays ethical and legal concepts such as patient rights are included in the educational curriculum of Turkey [8]. Almost all the respondents (97.8%) believe that health care is a right this finding is similar to a study was conducted by Aydin and her colleagues [6], they reported that 98.7% of the students agreed that healthcare is a right and others findings of the current study similar to her findings like newborns with severe disabilities should be allowed to die. One third of the respondents agreed that upon the terminally ill patient's request, nurses and physicians should be allowed to end life. Generally, the respondent's awareness on patient's rights was good but need to improved, the respondents still have leak of knowledge on some points on the patient' rights.

The study results suggest that future study should evaluate not only medical doctors and nurse but also other health workers and managements in different level. Health care rights are basic human rights based on the concept of the fundamental dignity and equality of all human beings. The WHO [9] acknowledges that the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right to every human being. Health care students and health care providers have important roles in helping patients understand their health care rights, contributing to a safe and high quality health care system. They therefore need a good understanding of these rights to be able to uphold them [10]. The current study findgs show that total awareness of patients right among the participants was medium. The univesity is the best platform for the health care students to improve thier knowledge on patient rights before they start to work. This is first study on patients' rights that conducted among the health management students in Turkey and was conducted in different centers. The limitations of this study are; First, this study was designed a cross-sectional survey using self-administered questionnaires. Information bias may occur since the questionnaires may generate biased and preconceived answers. Second. The results obtained in this study should not be generalized to all health management students in Turkey since this study was carried out only public universities in the country. Future research should be conducted in more study centers and should include private universities as well.

4. CONCLUSION

More than half of the students (65%) have good knowledge among the patient rights but not satisfactory. The knowledge score is different among the senior and junior students and among universities. The future health management students should get proper patient's rights

lectures and the student's knowledge should be evaluated by universities.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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