Knowledge, and Practice of Nurses regarding informed consent at Friendship Hospital in Sudan

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Abstract

Aim: To assess the knowledge and practice of nurses about informed consent at Friendship Hospital in Sudan. **Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional hospital-based methodology was used. A hundred nurses enrolled in a study as total coverage, and data were gathered using an interview questionnaire. SPSS version 22 was used to analyze the data. **Results**: The study had A hundred participants, 69% Female making up most of the sample. The majority of participants age range between 35-39 years. A large number of participants had 7-10 years of experience. Regarding the informed consent process, half of the participants (50%) reported that they had enough information about the informed consent process. Also, forty percent of participants informed the patients about the risks and complications of their planned treatment. **Conclusion:** In conclusion, the study found that half of the participants knew the process of consent. Majority of participants were aware that mental status was an important indicator of the ability to ~~consent.~~ **Recommendations**: The findings manifest the need for an efficient education program that concentrates on learning nurses about consent.

Keywords :Consent, knowledge, practice

Introduction

Biomedical ethics, which pertains to patient autonomy in healthcare providers and patient relationships, places significant emphasis on informed consent. Healthcare providers have an ethical duty to respect patients' autonomy and give them the freedom to choose any proposed medical, surgical, or other treatments as well as research interventions. (shali, 2017) (Belete Fenta Kebede, 2023) Approval could be implicit. Disclosure of adequate information must come before consent. It is possible to contest consent because the patient was not provided with enough information to make an informed decision. Thus, it is imperative to furnish true, sufficient, and pertinent information in a language and style that is understandable to the patient—preferably without resorting to technical scientific jargon (Itir Erkan, 2017) The details of the planned procedures, the possible dangers and advantages of the process, the alternatives to the proposed method, including the natural course of non-treatment, and medical facts regarding the patient's health should all be included in the information given. (Bushra Ashraf, 2014) , In addition to discussing the risks, doctors can establish a system to ensure that relevant information about expected outcomes, possible alternatives, and what to expect before and after the procedure is communicated. If informed permission is not obtained, legal action may be taken. (Daniel E. Hall MD MDiv, 2012) The informed consent form promotes the patient's shared decision-making during the surgical treatment and fosters trust between patients and doctors. Before entering the operating room, every surgeon makes sure to review the informed consent letter. Without signed consent, every invasive procedure is prohibited by law and unethical. (Mengistu Mera Mihiretu1, 2024) The average amount of time that providers needed to spend

getting informed consent for elective surgery was five to twenty minutes. The time patients spend to complete the formal documentation for any conversations with the surgeon or nurses in the surgical outpatient area, or with their primary care physician before the surgical referral, was excluded. (Daniel E. Hall MD MDiv, Informed consent for clinical treatment, 2012) Informed consent is a procedure in which nurses have several responsibilities. Nurses must be aware of patients' moral and legal rights, and they should assist patients throughout the decision-making and treatment processes. (Giordano, 2019) (Mary J. Rock, 2014) Nurses should always evaluate their patients during the informed consent process because their awareness may be compromised by age, medication, or the course of their illness. The nurse is frequently compelled to give the patient and family members information that is vital to their health. (Veronica Strini, 2021)

1.2 Problem Statement

Getting informed consent before any surgery, whether surgical or nonsurgical, is required by law and ethics (Akyu¨z, 2019) In the medical field. Although informed consent is frequently under investigation in the United States and other countries, nurses are familiar with its principles and its application because it is a daily part of their work. (Veronica Strini, 2021) . Nurses must make sure patients are informed about both care and nursing interventions, as well as the surgical procedures they receive, so the idea of nursing employees taking the lead in getting informed consent should be carefully considered. (José Manuel García-Álvarez, 2023) Anxiety, stress, and fear previous to surgery can be lower in some cases when the information given to the patient is complete and effective. (José Manuel García-Álvarez, 2023) Within the parameters of their responsibilities, nurses should support and defend patients when they want them to sign informed consent forms. As patient defenders, nurses have a responsibility to assess patients' needs, protect them from exploitation, and offer them assistance. They should also actively educate patients about informed consent and make sure they are aware of all the procedures involved. All nurses and medical professionals should possess legal, and ethical knowledge regarding informed consent. (Akyu¨z, 2019).

1.3 Rational and Justification

A nurse's daily responsibilities include taking part in the informed consent process, and the nurse's involvement can change depending on the stage of the process: supporter, spokesperson, or eyewitness. (Astrid P Susilo, 2013) Obtaining informed consent from patients prior to initiating any treatment, regardless of how invasive, is a mandatory medical practice in most countries due to the clear fundamental nature of informed consent and its significant implications for medical care and patient treatment. (Chinwe S. F. Ezeruigbo, 2022) Regardless of the process be it physical examination, organ donation, or something else entirely—a patient's consent is required. Medical ethics and international human rights and legislation both heavily rely on the consent principle. (Galal, 2016).

Aim of the study:

This study aims to assess the knowledge and practice of nurses about informed consent at Friendship Hospital in Sudan.

Research question:

The researcher answered the question: What is a nurse’s knowledge about informed consent? What is the nurse’s practice regarding the informed consent form?

Materials and methods:

Study design:

The study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional hospital-based methodology to achieve its objectives.

Study area:

The Friendship Hospital is located in

Omdurman, Khartoum, Sudan, and provides comprehensive healthcare services to the community.

Study population:

A hundred nurses at Friendship Hospital have enrolled in a study as nurse staff, total coverage.

Inclusion criteria

During study periods, the sample size includes all nurses staff in Friendship Hospital with Permanent jobs.

Exclusion criteria

Nurses who have experience less than three years and work per time shift.

Sampling procedure and sample size

During the study period, the sample size includes all nurses who work at Friendship Hospital, one hundred nurses in total.

Data collection techniques:

All of the nurses at Friendship Hospital completed a questionnaire that included an interview and an explanation of the research's purpose.

Data collection tool:

Information gathered through an interview questionnaire. First segment: sociodemographic data; Second segment: knowledge and practice regarding the consent form.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22, the results were presented as tables showing numbers and percentages.

Ethical consideration:

Verbal consent was gained from each participant, and authorization was received by the Alneelain Institution Review Board IRB, Administration authority of Friendship Hospital to get permission from the hospital research center.

Pilot research:

A pilot study was carried out to evaluate the instrument's validity and reliability. Ten percent of the research sample was used.

Results summary:

The background information about the study participants, including their age, gender, and years of experience, is showed in Table 1. 31.7% of the participants were male, and with 69% were female making up the majority of the sample (69%). The majority of participants age range between 35-39 years .14% of participants had ten years or more experience.

Table (2): The majority of participants had a Bachelor's degree in nursing and only one had PhD degree.

Table (3): Distribution of the participant according to their formal training on informed consent, the majority (79 %) had no formal training on informed consent.

Table (4): Half of the participants (50%) reported that they had enough information about the informed consent process. And all participant knows one type of Informed Consent. Forty-three percent of participants know who should give informed consent to be signed by patients, also nearly Half of the participants (45%) know important indicators for the ability to consent. 69% of the participants know the legal consent age. More than half of the participants (51%) know about legal regulations concerning the consent process in Hospitals, sixty-three percent of the participants realize the hospital regulations don't permit giving the patients a copy of the signed consent form.Also, nearly half of the participants (45%) tell patients about average duration to stay in hospital. More than half of the participants (51%) know about the average duration nurses spending with patients to explain to them all the necessary information before signing the surgical consent form. Forty percent of participants informed the patients about the risks and complications of their planned treatment. Most participants understand surgical consent form to be signed in the surgical department. Forty percent of participants inform the patients of their medical condition in details.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the population.

Items		Frequency	Percent
Age	30-34 years	16	15
	35-39 years	45	51
	40-44 years	25	20
	45 years and Above	14	14
	Total	100	100
Gender	Male	31	31
	Female	69	69
	Total	100	100
Years of experience	3-5 years	15	15
	5-7 years	51	51
	7-10 years	20	20
	Above 10 years	14	14
	Total	100	100

Table (2): Distribution of the participant profile according to their job.

Items	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Axillary nurse	**7**	**5.2**
Diploma nurse	**20**	**14.9**
Bachelor nurse	**60**	**44.8**
Master nurse	**10**	**7.5**
PhD nurse	**1**	**.7**

Table (3): Formal Training on Consents

Items	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Formal Training on Consents		
-Yes	**21**	**21**
- No	**79**	**79**

Table (4): Knowledge and practice of nurses regarding the consent.

Variable	Patients	
	No. (n=100)	Percent (100%)
Do you have enough knowledge about the consent process?		
- Yes	50	50
- Partially	46	46
- No	4	4
What is Types of Consent?		
- Implied consent	7	7
- Explicit consent	12	12
- Active consent	4	4
- Passive consent	2	2
- Written	71	71
- Oral	4	4
Who should give the informed consent to the patients to be signed?		
- Medical officer	43	43
- Nurse	18	18
- consultant	32	32
-Department clerk	7	7
Do you know the important indicators for the ability to consent?		
- Age	11	11
- Literacy	5	5
- Mental status	84	84
Do you know legal consent age?		
18-20 years	69	69
20-25 years	17	17
25-30 years	12	12
Above 30 years	2	2
Are there any legal and ethical regulations concerning the consent process in Hospitals?		
- Yes	51	51
- No	49	49
Do the hospital regulations permit give the patients a copy of the signed informed consent form?		
- Yes	37	37
- No	63	63
Do you till the patients about possible risks and complications of their planned treatment?		
- In details	40	40
- Briefly	47	47
- Partially (only on most common risks and complications)	13	13
Do you know the patient's average stay duration in the hospital?		

- Yes - No	45 55	45 55
What is the average duration a nurse spends with the patients to explain to them all the necessary information before signing the surgical informed consent? -< 5 minutes -5 - < 15 minutes -15- 30 minutes	 39 51 10	 39 51 10
Where should the surgical informed consent form be signed? -In the surgical department -In the operating room	 85 15	 85 15
Do you inform the patients about their medical condition? - In details - Partially - No	 41 47 12	 40 47 13

Discussion:

The patients have a right to sufficient information concerning procedures and therapies. To do this, healthcare providers must understand their roles and obligations. This study aims to assess the knowledge and practice of nurses about consent in a friendship hospital in Sudan. The results of our study were consistent with those of the study conducted by Akyuz in Turkey, which revealed that the majority of participants (79%) had not received any specific training about informed consent. (Akyu¨z, 2019) (Wogene Negash, 2021) The present study revealed that 43% of participants stated that medical officers should obtain informed consent. This finding was consistent with a study done by Akyu¨z which found that most nurses thought doctors should get informed permission and that nurses had only a small share of the duty. (Akyu¨z, 2019) Additionally, from a legal and ethical standpoint, half of the participants (51%) answered that they were aware of the repercussions of not getting informed consent, demonstrating that they understood the legal and ethical implications of informed consent. However, in study conducted by Chinwe in NIGERIA found that the vast majority of participants (94.8%) were aware of the legal and ethical implications of informed consent. (Chinwe S. F. Ezeruigbo, 2022) This study reveals that half of the participants were knowledgeable about informed consent but a survey carried out by Chinwe shows affirmed knowledge about informed consent. (Chinwe S. F. Ezeruigbo, 2022) The present study found that the majority of participants were aware mental status is an important indicator of the ability to consent this finding is similar to a survey done by Chima in South Africa which found that most nurses in the study were aware of that and used routine mental status examinations to assess patients' competence. (Chima, 2022) According to this study, most of the participants spend between five and fifteen minutes on average, explaining all the facts the patient needs to know before signing the surgical consent. Which was in

line with what Chima's investigation found (Chima, 2022), and lower than the result of the Wogene study.(Wogene Negash, 2021)

According to this study majority of participants informed the patients about their medical condition partially, but in the study done by chima almost all participants gave the patients complete information about their medical condition. (Chima, 2022) Furthermore, 40% of participants fully notified the patients about all the risks and complications associated with the planned treatment, this is similar to a study conducted by Wogene, which found more than one-third of the participants provided the patient with complete information about their medical condition. (Wogene Negash, 2021)

Conclusion:

In conclusion study found that half of the participants knew the consent process. Majority of participants were aware that mental status is an important indicator of the ability to consent. Less than half of the participants informed the patients about all the risks and complications associated with the planned treatment

Recommendations:

The findings show the urgent need for a successful education program about consent.

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