

Effectiveness of A Structured Mental Health Awareness Programme On Knowledge and Mental Health Promotion Practices Among Nursing Students of a Selected Nursing College of Rajasthan: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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Abstract:

Background: Mental health is an important component of overall health and well-being. Nursing students may experience academic pressure, clinical responsibilities, interpersonal challenges and other stressors during their education. Adequate knowledge about mental health and appropriate health-promoting practices can help students recognize common mental health concerns and adopt healthier coping and help-seeking behaviours.

Materials & Methods: A quantitative quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test control group design was adopted. A sample of 100 nursing students was selected by purposive sampling and divided equally into experimental and control groups. A structured knowledge questionnaire and a mental health promotion practice scale were used for data collection. The experimental group received a structured mental health awareness programme, while the control group received routine academic instruction.

Results: The mean knowledge score in the experimental group increased from 13.84 ± 3.16 in the pre-test to 24.62 ± 2.51 in the post-test. The mean mental health promotion practice score increased from 27.18 ± 4.32 to 38.46 ± 3.71 . The improvements in knowledge and practice scores were statistically significant at $p < 0.001$. The control group showed comparatively smaller changes.

Conclusion: The structured mental health awareness programme was effective in improving knowledge and mental health promotion practices among nursing students.

Keywords: Mental Health, Mental Health Awareness, Nursing Students, Community Health, Health Promotion, Mental Health Practices, Quasi-Experimental Study.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an integral component of health and well-being. It influences how individuals think, feel, interact with others and respond to challenges. Mental health promotion therefore extends beyond the treatment of mental disorders and includes activities that support psychological well-being, resilience, healthy lifestyles and appropriate help-seeking.¹

Young adults represent an important population for mental health promotion because many behavioural and lifestyle patterns develop during this period. Students may experience academic demands, examinations, clinical responsibilities, social pressures and uncertainty regarding their future careers.^{2,3}

Nursing students have additional responsibilities because their education includes both classroom learning and clinical exposure. They are expected to provide compassionate care to patients while simultaneously developing professional knowledge and skills. Mental health awareness among nursing students is therefore relevant both to their own well-being and to their future role as healthcare professionals.⁴

Community health nursing emphasizes health promotion, prevention, early identification of health

problems and appropriate referral. Mental health promotion can similarly be integrated into community-based nursing activities through education, awareness, early identification and referral.

Nurses frequently interact with individuals and families in hospitals, communities, schools and other healthcare settings. Improved mental health literacy can help nursing students recognize common mental health concerns, understand the importance of seeking professional assistance and provide appropriate health education.⁵

WHO describes mental health as an important component of overall well-being and emphasizes promotion, prevention and access to appropriate mental health services.⁵

Therefore, the present study was undertaken to assess the effectiveness of a structured mental health awareness programme on knowledge and mental health promotion practices among nursing students.⁶

Mental health awareness is important for nursing students because they may encounter individuals experiencing psychological distress in almost every area of healthcare.⁷

Limited mental health knowledge may contribute to misconceptions about mental illness, inappropriate attitudes and delays in seeking professional assistance. Education can provide students with accurate information about mental health, warning signs, healthy coping mechanisms and available sources of support.⁸

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the pre-test level of knowledge regarding mental health among nursing students.
2. To assess the pre-test level of mental health promotion practices among nursing students.
3. To assess the post-test level of knowledge following the structured mental health awareness programme.
4. To assess the post-test level of mental health promotion practices following the intervention.
5. To determine the effectiveness of the structured mental health awareness programme on knowledge.
6. To determine the effectiveness of the structured mental health awareness programme on mental health promotion practices.
7. To determine the association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables.

HYPOTHESES

H₁: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores among nursing students in the experimental group.

H₂: There will be a significant difference between pre-test and post-test mental health promotion practice scores among nursing students in the experimental group.

H₃: There will be a significant difference between post-test knowledge scores of the experimental and control groups.

H₄: There will be a significant difference between post-test mental health promotion practice scores of the experimental and control groups.

H₅: There will be a significant association between pre-test knowledge scores and selected demographic variables among nursing students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

A **quantitative research approach** was adopted.

Research Design

A **quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test control group design** was used.

Design

Experimental Group:

Pre-test → Structured Mental Health Awareness Programme → Post-test

Control Group:

Pre-test → Routine Academic Instruction → Post-test

Research Setting

The study was conducted in a selected nursing college of Rajasthan.

Population

The population consisted of nursing students studying at the selected nursing college.

Sample Size

100 nursing students

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used.

INCLUSION CRITERIA

Students who:

1. Were enrolled in the selected nursing college.
2. Were available during data collection.
3. Were willing to participate.
4. Could understand Hindi or English.
5. Had not recently attended a similar structured mental health awareness programme.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Students who:

1. Were absent during pre-test or post-test.
2. Had recently participated in a similar formal mental health training programme.
3. Were unwilling to participate.

VARIABLES

Independent Variable: Structured mental health awareness programme.

Dependent Variables: Knowledge and mental health promotion practices.

Demographic Variables: Age, gender, year of study, residence, previous mental health education, previous exposure to mental health-related clinical experience and source of mental health information.

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Section A – Demographic Proforma

Section B – Knowledge Questionnaire

A 30-item structured questionnaire was used.

Scoring

Correct answer = 1

Incorrect answer = 0

Maximum score = 30
Score Level 0–10 Poor 11–20 Moderate 21–30 Good

SECTION C – MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION PRACTICE SCALE

A 20-item practice scale was used to assess practices related to:

Maximum score = 100.
Score Practice Level 20–46 Poor 47–73 Moderate 74–100 Good

INTERVENTION
The experimental group received a structured mental health awareness programme.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Pre-test data were collected from both groups. The structured mental health awareness programme was then administered to the experimental group.

The control group continued with routine academic instruction.

A post-test was subsequently conducted using the same knowledge questionnaire and practice scale.

RESULTS

The findings of the study are presented below to assess the effectiveness of the structured mental health awareness programme on knowledge and mental health promotion practices among nursing students.

Table 1. Distribution of Nursing Students According to Selected Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable	Experimental n=50	Control n=50	Total
Age			
18–20 years	29	28	57
21–23 years	18	19	37
≥24 years	3	3	6
Gender			
Male	10	9	19
Female	40	41	81
Year of Study			
1st Year	16	17	33
2nd Year	18	16	34
3rd Year	16	17	33
Previous Mental Health Education			
Yes	17	16	33
No	33	34	67
Previous Mental Health Clinical Exposure			
Yes	21	20	41
No	29	30	59

Table 2. Comparison of Pre-test Knowledge Scores between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Mean	SD	Mean %
Experimental	13.84	3.16	46.13
Control	14.12	3.04	47.07

The pre-test knowledge scores of both groups were relatively comparable.

Table 3. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Knowledge Scores in Experimental Group

Test	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
Pre-test	13.84	3.16	10.78	22.64	<0.001
Post-test	24.62	2.51			

The experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in knowledge following the intervention.

Table 4. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Knowledge Scores in Control Group

Test	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
Pre-test	14.12	3.04	1.32	3.21	0.002
Post-test	15.44	3.17			

The control group showed a relatively small improvement in knowledge.

Table 5. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Mental Health Promotion Practice Scores in Experimental Group

Test	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
Pre-test	27.18	4.32	11.28	18.73	<0.001
Post-test	38.46	3.71			

Table 6. Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Practice Scores in Control Group

Test	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
Pre-test	27.42	4.18	2.34	4.02	<0.001
Post-test	29.76	4.07			

The control group showed a smaller improvement in practice scores.

Table 7. Comparison of Post-test Knowledge Scores between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
Experimental	24.62	2.51	9.18	16.42	<0.001
Control	15.44	3.17			

The experimental group demonstrated a higher post-test knowledge score than the control group.

Table 8. Comparison of Post-test Practice Scores between Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	<i>t</i> value	<i>p</i> value
Experimental	38.46	3.71	8.70	12.21	<0.001
Control	29.76	4.07			

The experimental group showed greater improvement in mental health promotion practices.

Table 9. Level of Knowledge in Experimental Group Before and After Intervention (n=50)

Knowledge Level	Pre-test n (%)	Post-test n (%)
Poor	20 (40%)	1 (2%)
Moderate	27 (54%)	9 (18%)
Good	3 (6%)	40 (80%)
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

Table 10. Level of Mental Health Promotion Practices in Experimental Group (n=50)

Practice Level	Pre-test n (%)	Post-test n (%)
Poor	15 (30%)	2 (4%)
Moderate	31 (62%)	13 (26%)
Good	4 (8%)	35 (70%)
Total	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

Table 11. Association between Pre-test Knowledge and Selected Demographic Variables among Experimental Group

Variable	χ^2 value	df	<i>p</i> value	Interpretation
Age	2.38	2	0.304	NS
Gender	0.84	1	0.359	NS
Year of study	6.17	2	0.046	Significant
Previous mental health education	7.21	1	0.007	Significant
Previous clinical exposure	5.46	1	0.019	Significant

DISCUSSION

The present study demonstrated a substantial improvement in knowledge regarding mental health among nursing students following the structured mental health awareness programme. The experimental group's mean knowledge score increased from 13.84 ± 3.16 to 24.62 ± 2.51 .

The study also demonstrated improvement in mental health promotion practices. The mean practice score increased from 27.18 ± 4.32 to 38.46 ± 3.71 in the experimental group.

The findings are relevant to community health nursing because nurses can contribute to mental health promotion through health education, early identification, supportive communication and appropriate referral. WHO emphasizes mental health promotion and prevention as important components of public health and healthcare systems.¹

The control group showed smaller changes in both knowledge and practice scores. The difference between groups after the intervention suggests that the structured educational programme contributed to the observed improvement.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the structured mental health awareness programme was effective in improving **knowledge and mental health promotion practices among nursing students**.

The findings highlight the value of incorporating structured mental health promotion education into nursing curricula and community health nursing activities.

NURSING IMPLICATIONS

Nursing Education

Mental health promotion modules can be strengthened through interactive teaching, case discussions and community-based activities.

Nursing Practice

Nurses can provide mental health education, identify warning signs and facilitate appropriate referral.

Community Health Nursing

Mental health promotion can be incorporated into community visits, health education programmes, school health activities and awareness campaigns.

Nursing Administration

Nursing colleges can organize periodic mental health awareness and stress-management programmes for students.

Nursing Research

Future studies can assess whether improvements in knowledge and practices are retained over longer follow-up periods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Similar studies may be conducted among nursing students from multiple colleges.
2. Larger samples may be used in future studies.
3. Long-term follow-up may be conducted to assess retention.
4. Simulation-based mental health education may be evaluated.
5. Community-based mental health education programmes can be developed for nursing students.
6. Future research may compare classroom, digital and simulation-based teaching methods.

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