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## **Factors related to nurses' knowledge and attitudes regarding geriatric nursing care in a rural hospital in Sri Lanka**

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Abstract

### Introduction & objectives

Geriatric nursing care has become one of the most significant branches of the nursing profession as the latest statistics have been proved that there is an increasing number of elderly populations worldwide. However, most of the Asian countries including Sri Lanka have been considerably delayed in asserting its professional status related to the specialty of geriatric nursing, resulting in nurses' knowledge and attitudes of geriatric nursing care are remaining poor. This is worst in rural areas. Hence the purpose of the study is to examine the factors related to nurses' knowledge and attitudes regarding geriatric nursing care in a rural hospital of Sri Lanka.

### Materials & methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study, 150 nursing officers were recruited conveniently from a rural hospital in Sri Lanka. Ethical approval was granted from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya. Data was collected through a pretested self-administered questionnaire and data analysis was done by using SPSS version 24.

### Results

Study results were significantly highlighted that most of the nursing officers had favorable attitudes regarding geriatric care (81.33%). The almost all nurses (98%) had a good understanding of the most common traumatic incidents that can be prevented by keeping the bed in low position, side rails up and adequate lighting in the ward. Only 58% of nurses aware that urinary incontinence in the elderly can be regained by performing perineal exercises. There was no significant relationship between the religion and the knowledge as well as educational qualifications and the knowledge ( $p>0.05$ ). Moreover, it has been found out that nursing officers working in medical units had more knowledge regarding geriatric care (84%) than the others.

### Conclusion

According to the study findings, it can be concluded that knowledge regarding geriatric care is not a significant predictor of the attitudes of the nurses. Most of them had favorable attitudes regarding geriatric care. There is no significant relationship between nurses' knowledge with religion and educational qualifications. However, their working place such as medical wards has

more influence for their knowledge level of geriatric care. Even though there is no such specialty been practiced, nurses have favorable knowledge and attitudes that can be used to develop and establish a specialty of geriatric nursing care practice for the betterment of the elderly population in most of the Asian countries including Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Geriatric nursing care, knowledge, attitudes, nurses, elderly population