

Original Research Article

A Study to Assess the Knowledge on Epilepsy of 1st MBBS Students of Mandya Institute Medical Sciences, Mandya

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Abstract: Epilepsy is the most common neurologic disease. Despite recent advances in the management of epilepsy the efforts to assess knowledge, attitude and practice towards epilepsy are limited, particularly in the developing countries. The study is conducted to determine the awareness of epilepsy among 1st year MBBS students of MIMS, Mandya. This cross-sectional study carried out for a month included 1st year medical students as study subjects. A pretested, structured questionnaire was administered to elicit the information. Data was entered in excel sheet and results were expressed in terms of percentage and proportions. The average age of the study subjects were 19.5±1.2 years. majority of them knew that it is not a mental illness (66%), it occurs in family (60%), and doesn't spread through contact (78%). However, 18% of them felt that it occurs due to previous sin and 52% felt that it is not due to organic brain damage. Majority of them knew that it cannot be cured (61%) and requires lifelong treatment (80%). majority of them felt that a person with epileptic can work (75%) and can get married (68%). In the present study, the knowledge was inadequate and more emphasizes should be given on health education.

Keywords: Epilepsy, Awareness, medical students

INTRODUCTION

Epilepsy is the most common noninfectious neurologic disease with a case load of 50 million people worldwide of which 80% of persons of sufferers live in the developing world [1]. Studies have reported an annual incidence of 20–70 cases per 100,000 [2] population with a point prevalence of 0.4–0.8% [3]. Developing countries has prevalence of 5 and 10% per 100 persons [4].

Despite recent advances in the management of epilepsy the efforts to assess knowledge, attitude and practice towards epilepsy are limited, particularly in the developing countries. To delineate the magnitude and scope of this problem, many studies were conducted to assess the knowledge of epilepsy among medicos. Also, studies have shown that some health professions lack sufficient knowledge to deal with epilepsy, which may result in a high treatment gap [5-7]. To improve this situation, we suggest that better education of health professionals can be instituted, especially at the undergraduate level. As a beginning knowledge, attitude and perceptions of first year MBBS students were assessed as knowledge and perception of diseases

among first year students originate from the beliefs of the society in general.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was carried out over a period of one month from May-June 2016 in Mandya institute of medical sciences, Mandya. Institutional ethical committee clearance was obtained before conducting the study. All first year MBBS students from MIMS, Mandya were included for the present study. The students were briefed about the objective of the study and their informed consent was taken for participation. A pretested, structured questionnaire were administered to the participants to obtain information regarding awareness on epilepsy. Data was entered in excel sheet and results were expressed in terms of percentage and proportions.

RESULTS

A total of 100 students were included for the present study. The average age of the study subjects were 19.5±1.2 years. All the study participants had heard of epilepsy. Among the study subjects 40% of them knew someone with epilepsy.

When asked about the cause of epilepsy, majority of them knew that it is not a mental illness(66%), it occurs in family (60%), and doesn't spread through contact (78%). However, 18% of them felt that it occurs due to previous sin and 52% felt that it is not due to organic brain damage (Table-1).

Table 1: Distribution of study subjects based on the etiology of epilepsy

Epilepsy	Correct Answer	Yes	No	Did not answer
Is a mental illness	No	32	66	2
Is due to organic brain damage	Yes	44	52	4
Is a familial disease	Yes	60	40	-
Spreads by contact	No	22	78	-
Occurs due to previous sins	No	18	82	-

Regarding the treatment of epilepsy, majority of them knew that it cannot be cured (61%) and requires lifelong treatment (80%), and that the drugs used have many side effects (93%). However, 65% of them felt that it cannot be treated with allopathic medicine (Table-2).

Table 2: Distribution of study subjects based on the treatment of epilepsy

Question	Correct answer	Yes	No
Can epilepsy be treated with allopathic medicine?	Yes	35	65
Does an epileptic patient need lifelong treatment?	Yes	80	20
A person of epilepsy should not leave even a single tablet?	Yes	91	9
Drug used in epilepsy have many side effects?	Yes	93	7
Can epilepsy be cured?	No	39	61

Based on their attitude, 88% told that they would not object studying/ working with an epileptic, and majority of them felt that a person with epileptic can work (75%) and can get married (68%).

DISCUSSION

Even though epilepsy is a common disease existing since ages, misconception still exists and hence the stigma and discrimination for the epileptics. To

carry out the awareness program on epilepsy, the baseline knowledge has to be elicited so that we can build on the existing knowledge. In the present study, we included first year medical students as their knowledge is comparable to that of the pre-university knowledge.

In the present study, there were 100 study subjects. among which all of them had heard of epilepsy which is similar to other studies [8, 9]. When asked about the cause of epilepsy, majority of them knew that it is not a mental illness (66%), it occurs in family (60%), and 48% felt that it is due to organic brain damage. In our study majority of them knew that it is not contagious, which was similar to other studies [8-11].

Among the participants, 18% of them felt that it occurs due to previous sin, in various other studies it ranged from 5%-30% [8, 10, 12].

Regarding the treatment of epilepsy, majority of them knew that it cannot be cured (61%) and requires lifelong treatment (80%), and 65% of them felt that it cannot be treated with allopathic medicine. The findings were similar to study conducted by Goel *et al* where in majority felt that it requires lifelong treatment, but majority felt that it can be cured by ayurveda treatment [8].

Based on their attitude, majority of them felt that it doesn't hinder the work or marriage of person with epilepsy which was similar to other studies [10]. However in a study conducted by Goel majority felt that epilepsy is an hindrance for marriage and occupation [8].

CONCLUSION

In the present study, the knowledge was inadequate and more emphasizes should be given on health education.

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