

Original Research Article

## **Patients and nurses knowledge and attitude regarding general anaesthesia and anesthesiologist**

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**Abstract:** This study was done to assess the patients' knowledge and perception about anaesthesia and anesthesiologist role for the surgical procedures. The study was conducted at the dept. of anaesthesia, SMBT medical college, Dhamangaon, dist. Nasik, over a period of 6 months. We had selected 200 patients randomly admitted for the elective surgery under different specialties and coming to the anaesthesia OPD for the pre-anaesthesia check-up. The study was conducted with the help of 15 questionnaires which were formulated to assess the patients' knowledge, awareness and fears associated with the anaesthesia and anesthesiologist. All the data were collected, tabulated and analysis was done. The study was conducted on 211 patients, out of which 11 patients had selected wrong options or selected multiple options. Therefore only 200 patients were taken into consideration for the study. On questioning about the provider of anaesthesia, it was found that most of the patients (44.5 %) were having the knowledge that operating surgeons were the anaesthesia providers, while only 22% patients knows that anesthesiologist were the anaesthesia providers. On patients perception about the role of anesthesiologist in the operation theatre, it was found that 48 % patients think that anesthesiologist anesthetizes the patient and stays in the operation theatre, while only 19 % patients knows the exact role of anesthesiologist i. e. anesthetizes and takes care of the patients vital parameters. Most (43.5%) of the patients were having average knowledge about the anaesthesia and anesthesiologist. In conclusion, the patients' perceptions of anaesthesia and anesthesiologists' roles were average, but improvements in this relationship still need to be pursued, in order to achieve better outcomes. Anesthetic care was important in providing information, confidence and reassurance among patients, regarding their perceptions.

**Keywords:** Anaesthesia, Anesthesiologist, Patients

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The specialty of anaesthesia has revolutionized over the past 50 years by the development of new anesthetic agents, techniques and new development in monitoring system. However, even now most of the patients are not well aware of the role of anesthetist and especially their knowledge is very poor regarding anesthetist's commitments outside the operation theatre. There is a general feeling that the specialty of anaesthesia carries low profile when compared to other medical and surgical specialties. In some countries studies of similar kind showed that the public knowledge of anesthetic practice and attitude towards it, is limited [1-4].

Anaesthesiology is one of the youngest branches of medical science that has made immense development. Advances in surgery and anaesthesia go absolutely parallel to each other. There is a general feeling that the specialty of anaesthesia carries low profile when compared to other medical and surgical specialties [5-7].

With time, anaesthesiology as a speciality has evolved leaps & bounds. The problems of image and status of anaesthesiologists in eyes of the medical and lay communities are not new [8 ,9].

Anesthesiologist plays a very critical role in intensive critical care units, trauma centres, pain clinics and as a member of resuscitation team all over the

world.4 Since last ten years there is tremendous health care awareness, especially in developed countries. In India also, people have begun to have awareness since CPA (consumer protection act) has come into existence. But still they have hardly any knowledge of the structure of medical services and practices especially related to operating room and anesthetic management [4].

This study was done to assess the patient's knowledge and perception about anaesthesia and anesthesiologist role for the surgical procedures.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The study was conducted at the dept. of anesthesia, SMBT medical college, Dhamangaon, dist. Nasik, over a period of 6 months. Approval from the ethical committee was obtained before start of the study and informed consent was taken from each of the participant. We had selected 200 patients randomly admitted for the elective surgery under different specialties and coming to the anaesthesia OPD for the pre-anaesthesia check-up.

**Exclusion criteria**

- Patient over age of 70 years
- Patients under age of 15 years
- Patients with psychiatric illness, severe medical or surgical conditions
- Patients unable to speak
- Patients refusing to participate in the study.

The study was conducted with the help of 15 questionnaires which were formulated to assess the patients knowledge, awareness and fears associated

with the anaesthesia and anesthesiologist. The questions were structured in the local language for the better understanding of the participants. all the data were collected, tabulated and analysis was done.

**RESULTS**

The study was conducted on 211 patients, out of which 11 patients had selected wrong options or selected multiple options. Therefore only 200 patients were taken into consideration for the study. Most of the patients were seen from the age group of 31 to 45 years. Male patients were more as compared to females and rural patients was found to be more participated than urban patients. (Table 1)

On questioning about the provider of anaesthesia, it was found that most of the patients (44.5 %) were having the knowledge that operating surgeons were the anaesthesia providers, while only 22% patients knows that anesthesiologist were the anaesthesia providers. (Table 2, Graph 2)

On patients perception about the role of anesthesiologist in the operation theatre, it was found that 48 % patients think that anesthesiologist anesthetizes the patient and stays in the operation theatre, while only 19 % patients knows the exact role of anesthesiologist i. e. anesthetizes and takes care of the patients vital parameters. (Table 3, Graph 2)

The patients' score of the answers were divided into poor, average and good. It was found that, most (43.5%) of the patients were having average knowledge about the anaesthesia and anesthesiologist. (Table 4, Graph 3)

**Table-1: Demographic profile of the patients**

Variables	Group	Frequency
<b>Age</b>	15-30	32
	31-45	79
	46-60	58
	61-70	31
<b>Gender</b>	Male	109
	Female	91
<b>Education</b>	Illiterate	21
	Upto SSC	42
	Upto HSC	55
	Graduate	65
	Postgraduate	17
<b>Residence</b>	Rural	138
	Urban	62

**Table-2: Patients perception of anaesthesia provider**

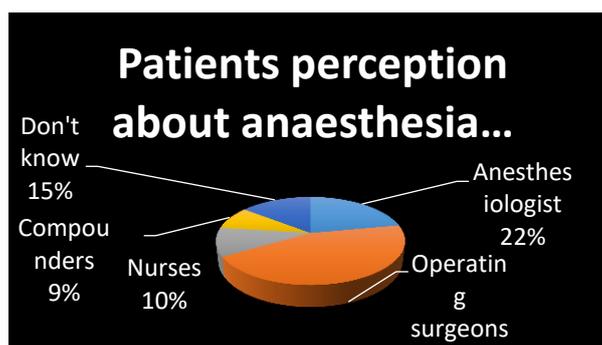
Anaesthesia provider	Number of participants	%
Anesthesiologist	44	22
Operating surgeons	89	44.5
Nurses	21	10.5
Compounders	17	8.5
Don't know	29	14.5

**Table-3: Patients perception about the role of anesthesiologist in the operation theatre**

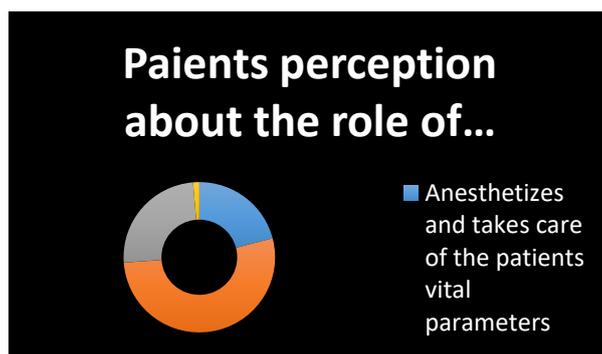
Role of anesthesiologist	Number of participants	%
Anesthetizes and take care of patients vital parameters	38	19
Anesthetizes and stays in OT	96	48
Anesthetizes and leaves the OT	45	22.5
Don't know	21	10.5

**Table-4: Distribution of the patients according to the knowledge about the anaesthesia and anesthesiologist**

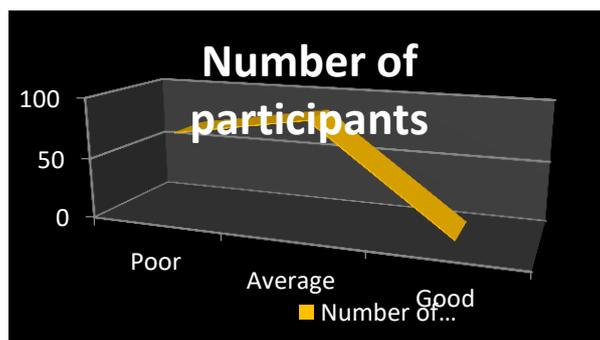
Score	Number of participants	%
0-5 (Poor)	69	34.5
6-10 (Average)	87	43.5
11-15 (Good)	44	22



**Fig-1: Patients perception of anaesthesia provider**



**Fig-2: Patients perception about the role of anesthesiologist in the operation theatre:**



**Fig-3: Distribution of the patients according to the knowledge about the anaesthesia and anaesthesiologist:**

## DISCUSSION

The discipline of anaesthesia, despite having developed to encompass intensive care, pain management, and trauma care, still there is not enough public exposure regarding the role of anaesthesiologists. Moreover, the public image of anaesthesiologist is so poor that many do not know if an anaesthesiologist is a medically qualified physician [10].

Since last ten years there is tremendous health care awareness, especially in developed countries. In India also people have begun having awareness since CPA (consumer protection Act) has come into existence. But still they have hardly any knowledge of the structure of medical service and practices specially relating to operating room services, specially relating to anaesthetic management [5].

The profession of anaesthesiology has long been suffering from low appraisal among the general population. This misperception might have affected the anxiety level of patients who are candidates for surgery [11].

The widespread role of anaesthesiologist and current breadth of aesthetic practice is not known to the public and even other healthcare personnel. Usually, they have very limited knowledge about the specialty. Although, anaesthesiologists recognize the difficulty that the rest of the world has in identifying just what an anaesthesiologist is, with the explosive growth of media such as television and the internet over the recent past, there may be a possible increased awareness among the public [10].

Public awareness programme are being arranged in many developed countries and on 25 May 2000 National Anaesthesia Day was observed to inform the public about the role and training of anaesthetists [4].

Recognition of the anaesthesia profession as an independent specialty would encourage future recruits to take up the specialty. Lack of recognition and decreased appreciation of the role of the

anaesthesiologist by the patient contributes to the frustration of the anaesthetic practitioner [12].

Anesthesiology as a medical specialty had its beginnings in the early part of this century when physicians began to manage vital functions during surgery in addition to simply performing the surgical prerequisites of inducing unconsciousness and waking patients at the end of surgery. Complex surgery performed on sicker patients became increasingly possible as anaesthetists developed techniques for critical care and active perioperative management of vital functions. The general public understood little of these developments. At the 1939 New York World's Fair, the nascent specialty of anaesthesiology announced itself to the nonmedical world [13].

The anaesthesiologist-patient relationship is established during the preoperative visit, which is an occasion at which physicians and patients examine each other. The preoperative visit is the best, if not the only opportunity to provide patients with correct information about the anaesthetic procedure. Studies on knowledge, attitudes and concerns regarding anaesthesia, as well as regarding anaesthesiologists' image have suggested that talking to patients during the preoperative visit can enhance their confidence in the anaesthetic procedure. Moreover, the benefits from recent advances that have reduced the risks rather than just the hazards of anaesthetic practice should be actively promoted among the population, in order to improve the strategies for better anaesthesia-surgery outcomes [14, 15].

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the patients' perceptions of anaesthesia and anaesthesiologists' roles were average, but improvements in this relationship still need to be pursued, in order to achieve better outcomes. Anaesthetic care was important in providing information, confidence and reassurance among patients, regarding their perceptions.

Anaesthesia and anaesthesiologist is not well perceived by those patients who are deprived from education financially poor and those who come from

undeveloped areas. Effort should be directed to talk and listen to this special group in an effort to induce better comprehension of consent and to share the choice of anaesthesia techniques and understand risk managements.

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