

Pain Assessment and Management in Critically Ill Patients: Nurses' Knowledge and Practices

By

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Abstract

Background: Pain is one of the most common experiences and stressors in critically ill patients and has been defined as the fifth vital sign due to its importance in nursing practice. Lack of Nurses' knowledge and in appropriate practices are major contributing factors in improper management of pain. **Aim of the study:** to assess critical care nurses' knowledge & practices regarding pain assessment and management. **Research Design:** A descriptive exploratory design was utilized. **Research questions:** a) what is the nurses' knowledge level regarding pain assessment and management? b) What are the different nurses' practices regarding pain assessment and management? c) What are the different pain assessment & management barriers reported by the nurses as a hindrance for application? **Setting:** selected medical, Emergency and Neurosurgery critical care units at Cairo University Hospitals. **Sample:** A convenient sample of 60 nurses with a minimum one year of experience was included in the study. **Tools of data collection; Tool 1:** background data sheet, Pain related information and Reported barriers regarding pain assessment and management **Tool 2:** Interview knowledge questionnaire schedule **Tool 3:** Observational checklist. **Results:** the majority of the studied sample (93.3% & 95%) had an unsatisfactory knowledge and practices level respectively. Approximately three quarter of them (73.4%) answered knowledge questions incorrectly and (77.6%) had incorrect practices regarding pain assessment and management. Moreover, more than half of the studied sample (75%, 63.3% & 58.3%) reported that the factors that may affect their abilities to assess pain were lack of education, nursing workload and Patient instability respectively. Finally there is no significant correlation between gender, age, years of experience in nursing and ICU and their level of knowledge as well as practice except negative correlation between knowledge and educational level and between working areas and practice level. **Conclusion:** critical care nurses knowledge and practices regarding pain assessment and management need to be improved. Moreover, Reported barriers have to be handled. **Recommendations:** Enrichment of Cairo university critical care nurse's knowledge and practices in relation to pain assessment and management, In addition to handling of related barriers would be of great value for improvement of care provided to such group of patient's. Replication of this study on a larger probability sample from different geographical areas in Egypt is highly recommended.

Key words: Nurses' knowledge, Nurses practices, pain assessment and management.