RESEARCH PAPER

Effectiveness of Structured Teaching Programme on Knowledge Regarding Mental Health Care Act, 2017 among B.Sc. Nursing Fifth Semester Students: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 represents an important rights-based development in Indian mental healthcare legislation and emphasizes access to mental healthcare, protection of the rights of persons with mental illness, dignity, autonomy and appropriate care. Nurses are closely involved in mental health assessment, treatment, documentation, advocacy and coordination of services; therefore, adequate knowledge of mental health legislation is essential for nursing students before entering professional practice. The present study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured teaching programme on knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 among B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students in selected nursing colleges. A quantitative research approach and quasi-experimental one-group pre-test post-test design were adopted. A total of 90 B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students were selected by non-probability convenience sampling. Data were collected using a self-administered 28-item knowledge questionnaire. A 45-minute structured teaching programme covering the introduction, evolution, history, stages and chapters of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 was administered after the pre-test. The post-test was conducted on the seventh day. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.9919. In the pre-test, 61.11% of students had poor knowledge and 38.89% had good knowledge, while none had very good or excellent knowledge. Following the intervention, 50% demonstrated very good knowledge and 48.89% demonstrated excellent knowledge. The mean knowledge score increased from 7.13 ± 2.17 in the pre-test to 21.02 ± 2.24 in the post-test. The mean difference was 13.88 ± 3.08, with a calculated paired t value of 42.76 and $p = 0.0001$, demonstrating a statistically significant improvement. The study concluded that the structured teaching programme was effective in improving students' knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

Key words: : Mental Healthcare Act, 2017; structured teaching programme; knowledge; nursing students; mental health legislation; psychiatric nursing; quasi-experimental study.

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. Mental health influences how individuals think, feel, behave, interact with others and respond to challenges. Mental illness may affect cognitive, emotional and behavioural functioning and can have consequences for individuals, families and communities. The increasing burden of mental health problems highlights the importance of accessible, ethical and rights-based mental healthcare. [1,7]

India has undergone an important transformation in its legal approach to mental healthcare. The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 was enacted to provide mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness and to protect, promote and fulfil their rights during the delivery of mental healthcare and related services. The Act replaced the Mental Health Act, 1987 and represents a shift towards a more rights-oriented and person-centred approach. The thesis notes that the Act received presidential assent on 7 April 2017 and came into force on 29 May 2018. [3]

The Act has important implications for nurses because nursing personnel participate directly in the care of persons with mental illness. Nurses are involved in communication, documentation, patient advocacy, treatment support, coordination of care and protection of patient rights. Knowledge of relevant legal provisions can help nurses provide care consistent with ethical and legal standards and support the dignity, confidentiality, autonomy and rights of persons with mental illness.[2]

Nursing students require appropriate preparation before assuming professional responsibilities. However, the literature reviewed in the thesis indicates inadequate or variable knowledge regarding mental health legislation among nursing students and healthcare professionals. Previous educational intervention studies have also demonstrated improvements in knowledge following structured teaching.[4]

The present study therefore focused on B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students, a group undergoing both academic and clinical preparation, and evaluated whether a structured teaching programme could improve their knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

Need of the Study

Mental health disorders represent a major public health concern and create substantial consequences for individuals, families and society. The need for effective mental healthcare is accompanied by the need to protect the rights of persons receiving such care. The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 provides an important legal framework for promoting access to mental healthcare and safeguarding the rights of persons with mental illness.[3]

For nurses, knowledge of mental health legislation is not merely theoretical. It can influence the manner in which patients are assessed, supported, documented and advocated for during care. Nurses need to understand relevant legal and ethical provisions so that they can contribute to safe, lawful and person-centred practice.[8]

The thesis identified inadequate awareness regarding mental health legislation among nursing students as an important concern. In the reviewed study of B.Sc. Nursing students, the majority had inadequate knowledge before educational intervention, supporting the need for systematic education. [10]

The present study was therefore undertaken to assess baseline knowledge and determine whether a structured teaching programme could produce measurable improvement. Such an intervention may strengthen nursing education and prepare students to protect the rights and dignity of persons with mental illness in future clinical practice.

Scholarly View

The literature reviewed for the study indicates that structured educational interventions can improve knowledge related to mental health and mental health legislation among nursing students. Studies involving nursing students have reported significant increases in post-test knowledge following structured or planned teaching programmes. For example, a study of nursing students regarding legal issues in mental health reported a significant increase in mean knowledge after structured teaching, while another study concerning the Mental Healthcare Act reported a significant improvement following planned teaching. These findings support the educational value of planned, systematic instruction for improving legal knowledge among future nurses.[4,10]

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured teaching programme on knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 among B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students in selected nursing colleges.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the effectiveness of a structured teaching programme on knowledge regarding the Mental Health Care Act, 2017 among B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students in selected nursing colleges.
2. To determine the association between pre-test knowledge regarding the Mental Health Care Act, 2017 and selected demographic variables among B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students.

These objectives are consistent with the objectives stated in the thesis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

A quantitative research approach was adopted for the study.

Research Design

A **quasi-experimental one-group pre-test post-test research design** was used. The students were assessed using a pre-test on Day 1, received the structured teaching programme on the same day, and were reassessed using the post-test on Day 7. The design was represented as O_1–X–O_2, where O_1 represented the pre-test, X represented the structured teaching programme and O_2 represented the post-test.

Study Setting

The study was conducted in B.Sc. Nursing Fifth Semester Students of selected nursing colleges after obtaining permission from the concerned authorities.

Population

The population consisted of B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students. The target population included students studying in B.Sc. Nursing fifth semester in selected nursing colleges, while the accessible population consisted of eligible students who were available during the period of data collection.

Sample Size

The sample consisted of 90 B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students. The thesis reports a sample-size calculation based on a 95% confidence level, an assumed proportion of 70%, and a 10% desired margin of error, resulting in an estimated requirement of approximately 80.67 and a final sample size of 90 students.

Sampling Technique

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was used.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Students studying in B.Sc. Nursing fifth semester, willing to participate and available during data collection were included. Students studying in Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing and M.Sc. Nursing were excluded.

Variables

The independent variable was the structured teaching programme on the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, while the dependent variable was knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. Demographic variables included age, gender, religion, type of family, area of residence, family income and previous knowledge regarding the Act.

Tool Description

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Section A consisted of demographic information. Section B consisted of a 28-item multiple-choice knowledge questionnaire regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. Each correct response received one mark and an incorrect response received zero; therefore, the maximum possible score was 28.

Knowledge scores were categorized as follows: 1–7, poor; 8–14, good; 15–21, very good; and 22–28, excellent.

The structured teaching programme was a 45-minute teaching session covering the introduction, evolution, stages, history and chapters of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

Validity and Reliability

The content and construct validity of the tool was established through review by 24 experts, including mental health nursing experts and a statistician. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient and was reported as r = 0.9919, indicating high reliability.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in selected nursing colleges from 9 October 2025 to 15 October 2025. Ten B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students were selected by convenience sampling. The study was found to be feasible.

Data Collection and Analysis

The main study was conducted from 3 November 2025 to 30 November 2025. The pre-test was conducted on Day 1, followed by the structured teaching programme, and the post-test was conducted on Day 7. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data and inferential statistics, including the paired *t* test, were used to determine the significance of the change in knowledge scores. The thesis reports use of SPSS version 27.0 for statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Institutional ethical approval was obtained, permission was taken from the concerned authorities, written informed consent was obtained from participants, and confidentiality of the collected information was maintained.

RESULTS

Table No 1. Distribution of Pre-Test and Post-Test Knowledge Levels (n = 90)

Knowledge level	Score range	Pre-test n (%)	Post-test n (%)
Poor	0–7	55 (61.11)	0 (0)
Good	8–14	35 (38.89)	1 (1.11)
Very good	15–21	0 (0)	45 (50.00)
Excellent	22–28	0 (0)	44 (48.89)

In the pre-test, 61.11% of students had poor knowledge and 38.89% had good knowledge; none demonstrated very good or excellent knowledge. The minimum score was 3, maximum score was 13, and the mean knowledge score was 7.13 ± 2.17, corresponding to a mean percentage score of 25.47 ± 7.76.

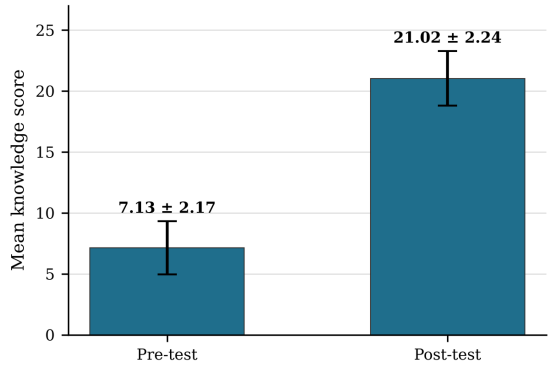
After the structured teaching programme, 50.00% of students had very good knowledge and 48.89% had excellent knowledge, while only 1.11% had good knowledge and none had poor knowledge. The post-test scores ranged from 14 to 25, with a mean score of 21.02 ± 2.24 and a mean percentage score of 75.07 ± 8.01.

Table no 2: Table showing significance of difference between knowledge score in pre and post-test of B.Sc. Nursing Fifth Semester Students

n=90

Test	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	df	Tabula-ted t-value	Calculat-ed t-value	p-value	Level of signific-ance
Pre-Test	7.13	2.17	13.88±3.08	89	1.98	42.76	0.0001	S,p<0.05

Figure 1. Comparison of Mean Pre-Test and Post-Test Knowledge Scores



The comparison demonstrates a marked increase in mean knowledge following the structured teaching programme. The mean score increased by 13.88 points, from 7.13 in the pre-test to 21.02 in the post-test.

Effectiveness of the Structured Teaching Programme

The paired *t* test showed a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test knowledge scores. The pre-test mean was 7.13 ± 2.17 and the post-test mean was 21.02 ± 2.24. The mean difference was 13.88 ± 3.08. With 89 degrees of freedom, the calculated *t* value was 42.76 compared with a tabulated value of 1.98, with $p = 0.0001$. Thus, the difference was statistically significant at the 0.05 level and the alternative hypothesis was accepted.

Association with Demographic Variables

The thesis found statistically significant associations between pre-test knowledge and age, type of family, and previous knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. Age showed $F = 8.16$, $p = 0.001$; type of family showed $F = 7.90$, $p = 0.001$; and previous knowledge showed $t = 2.33$, $p = 0.038$. No statistically significant association was found with gender, area of residence or source of knowledge.

DISCUSSION

The present study evaluated the effectiveness of a structured teaching programme on knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 among 90 B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students. The findings demonstrated a substantial improvement in knowledge after the intervention. Before the teaching programme, 61.11% of students had poor knowledge and 38.89% had good knowledge, while no participant demonstrated very good or excellent knowledge. Following the intervention, 50% achieved very good knowledge and 48.89% achieved excellent knowledge. The mean knowledge score increased from 7.13 ± 2.17 to 21.02 ± 2.24. The calculated paired *t* value of 42.76 was considerably greater than the tabulated value of 1.98, and the reported *p* value was 0.0001. This indicates that the improvement observed following the structured teaching programme was statistically significant.

The findings are consistent with previous educational intervention studies identified in the thesis. A study among B.Sc. Nursing students concerning legal issues in mental health reported a significant increase in knowledge following structured teaching, with mean post-test knowledge substantially higher than the pre-test score. Another study concerning the Mental Healthcare Act reported a significant increase in mean knowledge following planned teaching.[4,10] The present findings therefore support the use of structured teaching as a focused educational strategy for strengthening nursing students' knowledge of mental health legislation. The intervention is particularly relevant because nurses have responsibilities involving patient care, documentation, advocacy and protection of patient rights.[1,3,8] Improved knowledge can contribute to greater awareness of legal and ethical responsibilities in future mental health nursing practice. The study also identified significant associations between pre-test knowledge and age, type of family and previous knowledge of the Act, whereas gender, residence and source of information were not significantly associated with knowledge.

CONCLUSION

The present quasi-experimental study demonstrated that a structured teaching programme was effective in improving knowledge regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 among B.Sc. Nursing fifth-semester students. The baseline findings indicated an important knowledge gap: 61.11% of participants had poor knowledge and the remaining 38.89% had good knowledge, with no students achieving very good or excellent knowledge in the pre-test. After the

educational intervention, the knowledge profile changed considerably, with 50% of students achieving very good knowledge and 48.89% achieving excellent knowledge.

The mean knowledge score increased from 7.13 ± 2.17 in the pre-test to 21.02 ± 2.24 in the post-test. The statistically significant paired *t* value of 42.76 and *p* value of 0.0001 confirmed that the improvement was significant at the 0.05 level. The alternative hypothesis was therefore accepted.

The findings emphasize the importance of incorporating mental health legislation into undergraduate nursing education [3]. Systematic education regarding the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 can help future nurses understand their professional responsibilities and support the rights, dignity and safety of persons with mental illness [8]. Although the study was limited by its one-group design, convenience sampling, restricted setting and short follow-up period, the marked improvement in knowledge provides support for structured educational interventions. Future studies using larger samples, control groups and longer follow-up periods may provide stronger evidence regarding effectiveness and retention of knowledge.

Conflict of Interest

The author certifies that she has no involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or material discussed in this paper.

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