

Relationship between attitudes and practices of nurses towards intestinal stoma care in surgical units of selected tertiary care hospitals in the Western Province, Sri Lanka

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Intestinal stoma care is a critical aspect of practice in surgical units, where patients often require postoperative management, especially for novel stomas. Nurses' attitudes toward stoma care can directly influence the quality of patient management. Despite this, the relationship and the impact of this relationship remain unclear in this area in Sri Lanka. This study aimed to assess the correlation between attitudes and practices of nurses towards intestinal stoma care in surgical units of selected tertiary care hospitals in Western Province in Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional, correlational study was conducted among 422 nurses in surgical wards at three randomly selected tertiary-care hospitals in Western Province. Participants were selected using a simple random sampling method. Data were collected using a self-administered, pretested, and self-developed questionnaire with 0.871 Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS v.26. Descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were computed. Pearson's correlation was used to assess the relationships between variables. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. Of the 422 nurses approached, 317 responded (75.11%). The mean age was 33.67 ± 8.11 years. Most participants held a diploma in nursing (64.7%) and had 1–10 years of experience (65%). The mean attitude score was 67.96 ± 6.32 , while the mean practice score was 65.83 ± 20.04 . A majority (84.2%) demonstrated a positive attitude, but only 45.7% showed a good level of practice. Pearson's analysis revealed a statistically significant, positive correlation between attitude and practice scores ($r = 0.193$, $p = 0.001$). Although most nurses had positive attitudes, fewer demonstrated good practice. A weak but significant correlation suggests that favorable attitudes modestly influence better practice. Strengthening education, hands-on training, and supportive supervision is crucial to improve both attitudes and competencies in surgical stoma care.

Keywords: *Intestinal stoma care, Nurses' attitudes, Clinical practices, Surgical units*