Knowledge of Medical Ethics Among Medical Undergraduate Students in a Medical College in South India

Güney Hindistan'daki bir Tip Fakültesindeki Öğrenciler arasında Tibbi Etik Bilgisi

Chandni Gupta, Vikram Palimar, Sneha Guruprasad Kalthur

1Department of Anatomy, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, India,
2Department of Forensic Medicine, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, India

ABSTRACT

Introduction: All around the world medical training has become more and more commercialized and medical ethics has taken a backseat. Doctors should know medical ethics not only just to avoid blame of negligence but they should also respect the human morals principles. If we teach ethics to medical students it has shown significant influence on professionalism and moral qualities of medical professionals. The aim of this study is to assess the knowledge of bioethics in medical undergraduate students in a medical college in south India.

Materials and methods: The study is conducted on 108 undergraduate students who were studying at KMC, Manipal. A preformed proforma containing few questions regarding medical ethics will be given them to fill. The results are analyzed using simple statistics methods.

Results: Our study showed that 86.11% of students have knowledge of ethics. 57.4% of the students think that knowledge of ethics is very important in medical curriculum.

Conclusion: The study will help us to find the knowledge of medical ethics among the undergraduate medical student in a medical college in south India. It will also reflect the student view about the importance of knowledge of ethics in Medical curriculum.

Key Words: Ethics, undergraduate students, knowledge

Received: 08.06.2018 Accepted: 09.23.2018

ÖZET

Amaç: Tüm dünyada tıp eğitimi giderek daha ticari hale geldi ve tıp etiği arka koltuğa kaldı. Doktorlar tıbbi etiği yalnızca ihmal suçundan kaçınmak için değil, aynı zamanda insan ahlakının ilkelerine de saygı duymali. Tıp öğrencilerine etik öğretirsek, profesyoneller ve tıp uzmanlarının ahlaki nitelikleri üzerinde önemli bir etkisi olduğu görülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın amacı, güney Hindistan’da bir tıp fakültesindeki tıp öğrencilerindeki biyotik bilgilerini değerlendirmektir.

Yöntem: Çalışma KMC, Manipal’de okuyan 108 tıp öğrencisi üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Tıbbi etik ile ilgili birkaç soru içeren önceden hazırlanmış bir ankette doldurulacak. Sonuçlar basit istatistik yöntemleri kullanılarak analiz edilir.

Bulgular: Çalışmamız, öğrencilerin 86.11’inin etik bilgisine sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin 57,4%’u etik bilgisinin tıp müfredatında çok önemli olduğunu düşünüyor. 

Sonuç: Çalışma, güney Hindistan’da bir tıp fakültesindeki tıp öğrencileri arasındaki tıp etiği bilgilerini bulままza yardımcı olacaktır. Aynı zamanda öğrenciye Tıp müfredatında etik bilgisinin öncemi hakkında görüşü yansitacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Eti, lisans öğrencileri, bilgi

Geliş Tarihi: 06.08.2018 Kabul Tarihi: 23.09.2018
INTRODUCTION

Ethics has been defined as “the moral values that govern a person’s behavior”. Medical ethics is a branch of ethics which is concerned with moral principles and judgments in the field of medicine. The chief principles of healthcare ethics that must be maintained in all circumstances are beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice (1).

Health professionals are often met with numerous ethical dilemmas during their routine daily practice. Now a day people are very much concerned about the ethical behavior of doctors. This is most commonly seen when they show grievances about reduced ethical behavior and an increase in the legal action against doctors (2).

There are numerous codes of behavior and laws regulating the profession have been incorporated in the health experts’ teaching core programme in numerous countries, and there is an increase in the number of people who teach ethics and ethical committees. In spite of this, there is increase in grievances against healthcare professionals. This can be a because of either there is increase in people awareness about it or bad practices doctors (2).

The conventional medical curriculum teaching provides very little information on how to resolve ethical dilemmas which they will encounter when they will become a doctor. According to Medical council of India training undergraduate students in medical ethics is compulsory but it is taught in Forensic Medicine (3).

RESULTS

The objectives of this study was to know about the knowledge of medical ethics in medical undergraduate students in a medical college in south India.

MATERIAL and METHODS

The study is conducted on 108 medical undergraduate students who have completed 1 year course of MBBS and are studying in 2nd year. The study was approved by the institutional ethics committee.

A preformed proforma containing 10 questions regarding medical ethics was given them to fill after taking informed consent. The results are analyzed using simple statistics methods.

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, medical ethics is being commonly taught to undergraduate and graduate students during classes as well as in clinics (4). The goals of teaching medical ethics should be to (i) enable students to learn better the implications of ethics in all phases of their profession, (ii) prepare students to develop the skill to recognize fundamental ethical problems and difficulties in day to day medical practice, and (iii) train them to consider substitutes under the particular situations and make conclusions based on acceptable moral ideas and traditional practices.

Janakiram C did the study about knowledge of ethics in medical and dental post-graduates, he found that medical and dental postgraduates get to know about bioethics from “other sources such as the Internet, newspapers, etc”, followed by their “undergraduate training” and”experience at work”. But in our study most of the students got the knowledge of ethics from lectures/seminars.
Bernard Asamoah Barnie et al conducted a study on health care workers to check their knowledge and opinion regarding their training in ethics, confidentiality and medico-legal issues. They found that 74% had knowledge on ethics while in our study 86.11% students had the knowledge of Medical ethics (5).

Aacharya RP, Shakya YL conducted a study on 46 Medical undergraduate interns of Maharajgunj Medical Campus, the medical college of Nepal. They found that the most common source of knowledge on ethics for them was lectures/seminars (35.7%) followed by experience at work (24.5%), training (21.4%) and own reading (17.3%) in our study also the most common source was lectures/seminars (41.6%) followed by own reading (21.2%), training (20.3%) and others (internet, newspapers etc) (3%). The main contents of Hippocratic Oath were known to 98.8% but in our study 87.03% of student knows about Hippocratic Oath. Great majority (91.3%) regard ethics as very important in medical profession but in our study only 57.4% think that ethics as very important in medical profession (8).

Chatterjee B, Sarkar J conducted a study to assess the knowledge of and attitudes towards medical ethics among 322 undergraduate medical students of a medical college in West Bengal. They found that the students generally agreed that awareness of ethics was important but in our study only 57.4% think that ethics as very important in medical profession. For their students lectures (54.7%) and books (47.8%) were the predominant sources of knowledge in our study also lectures/seminars (35.7%) were the predominant source followed by experience at work (24.5%). In their study only 10.9% were aware of the existence of an institutional ethics committee but in our study 87.96% know that there is an ethics committee in our institution (7).

Adhikari S, Paudel K, Aro AR, Adhikari TB and Mishra SR conducted a study on 118 resident doctors and 86 ward nurses in the tertiary care teaching hospital of Nepal. They found that 33 % of doctors and 51 % of nurses were unaware Hippocratic Oath but in our study only 12.9% were unaware of Hippocratic Oath. They also found that 90% of both groups were unaware of Nuremberg code in our study also 72.22% of students were unaware of Nuremberg code. In their study 85 % of doctors and 88 % of nurses were unaware of Helsinki Declaration in our study also 74.07% students were unaware of Helsinki Declaration. In their study major source of information on healthcare ethics were lectures (67.5 % doctors versus 56.6 % nurses) followed by books (62.4 % doctors versus 89.2 % nurses), and then journals (59 % doctors versus 89.2 % nurses) in our study also most common source was lectures/seminars (41.6%) followed by own reading (21.2%), training (20.3%) and others (internet, newspapers etc.) (3%) (8).

Conflict of interest
No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

REFERENCES
1. Shrestha S, Jose P. Knowledge & practice of nursing ethics and laws. Journal of Universal College of Medical Sciences. 2014; 2:30-33.
2. Harirhan S, Jonnalagadda R, Walrond, E and Moseley H. Knowledge, attitudes and practice of healthcare ethics and law among doctors and nurses in Barbados. BMC Medical Ethics. 2006; 7:67.
3. Janakiram C, gardens SJ. Knowledge, attitudes and practices related to healthcare ethics among medical and dental postgraduate students in south India. Indian Journal of Medical Ethics. 2014; 11(2): 99-104.
4. DuBois JM, Burkemper J. Ethics education in U.S. medical schools: a study of syllabi. Acad Med. 2002; 77:432–7.
5. Barnie BA, Forson PK, Opare-Addo MNA, Appiah-Poku J, Ruhle GP, et al. Knowledge and Perceptions of Health Workers’ Training on Ethics, Confidentiality and Medico-Legal Issues. J Clin Res Bioeth. 2015; 6:205.
6. Aacharya RP, Shakya YL. Knowledge, attitude and practice of medical ethics among medical intern students in a Medical College in Kathmandu, Bangladesh Journal of Bioethics 2015; 6:1-9.
7. Chatterjee B, Sarkar J. Awareness of medical ethics among undergraduates in a West Bengal medical college. Indian J Med Ethics. 2012; 9:93-100.
8. Adhikari S, Paudel K, Aro AR, Adhikari TB, Adhikari B and Mishra SR. Knowledge, attitude and practice of healthcare ethics among resident doctors and ward nurses from a resource poor setting, Nepal. BMC Medical Ethics. 2016; 17:68.