

A cross-sectional study to assess knowledge and attitudes related to Basic Life Support among undergraduate medical students in Tamil Nadu, India

Mani G.^{1*}, Annadurai K.¹, Danasekaran R.¹, Ramasamy JD.²

¹ Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu, India

² Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College and Research Institute, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Basic life support (BLS) with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) provided at the right time greatly improves survival following cardiac arrest. Adequate knowledge and skills related to BLS are essential requisites for medical students. This study aimed to explore the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to BLS among undergraduate medical students of a medical college in Tamil Nadu, India.

Materials and Methods: This was a descriptive, cross-sectional study conducted among 241 undergraduate medical students of a medical college in Tamil Nadu, between May and July 2012, using a pretested, semi-structured questionnaire devised based on American Heart Association Guidelines for BLS and CPR 2010.

Results: The mean knowledge score of the participants was 4.55 ± 1.21 out of a possible high score of 6. The level of knowledge and attitudes related to BLS varied depending on the year of study, and this difference was statistically

significant ($p < 0.05$). The knowledge score decreased with increasing duration of training. The higher the year of study, the more positive the participants' attitudes were. Only 12.9% of the participants had ever practised BLS. Twenty-one (21) participants (8.7%) expressed reluctance about performing BLS in a hospital setting, and 57.3% of the participants expressed reluctance about performing BLS in an out-of-hospital setting. Fear of acquiring infection, causing harm to the victim, and lack of confidence were the common causes for participants' reluctance.

Conclusions: The study reveals inadequate knowledge and practices related to BLS among students. The differences in knowledge and attitudes among students, depending on the year of study, point to the need for frequent refresher training and motivation of students.

Key words: Basic life support (BLS); Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); Knowledge, attitude, practices (KAP); medical students