

Knowledge and Attitude of Women and Nurses regarding Pre-Conception Care: A Comparative Study

Background: Despite the established importance of preconception care (PCC), it is still not a well-established service in many countries, and women's and nurses' related knowledge and attitudes need to be assessed.

Aim of the study: To compare the knowledge and attitude of married women and nurses regarding pre-conception care.

Subjects and methods: This comparative cross-sectional study was carried out on a stratified cluster sample of 106 nurses and 750 women from Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Primary Health Care (PHC) centers at Minia city. The data collection tools were a self-administered questionnaire measuring nurse's awareness, knowledge, and attitudes related to PCC, and a similar interview questionnaire sheet for women. The tools were validated by experts' opinions and pilot-tested. Data collection lasted from June to November 2017.

Results: The majority of the nurses had a diploma (97.2%), 72.6% had training in antenatal care, and 60.4% provided PCC. Women's age ranged between 17 and 48 years, and 39.5% had an intermediate education. Nurses' awareness was higher than women ($p < 0.001$). They had higher knowledge scores in most areas and in total knowledge ($p < 0.001$), but women were higher in vaccination ($p = 0.001$). The attitude towards planning for pregnancy was higher among nurses ($p < 0.001$). In multivariate analysis nurses' higher qualification, longer experience years, and provision of PCC were positive predictors of their knowledge, while age and urban residence were negative predictors. Higher qualification and provision of PCC were positive predictors of nurses' attitude score, whereas urban residence was a negative predictor. Women's knowledge was positively predicted by their education, previous pre-term labor, planning pregnancy, having antenatal care, having PCC, and previous counseling, while labor complications and chronic diseases were negative predictors. Their attitude was positively predicted by urban residence, planning pregnancy, having antenatal care, previous counseling, and knowledge score, while education was a negative predictor.

Conclusion and recommendations: Nurses' knowledge and awareness of PCC is better compared to women, and both have hesitant attitudes. The study indicates the need for the urgent establishment of a formal PCC in PHC and MCH centers.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Nurses, Pre-Conception Care