

Perception of female nurse towards its male nurse co-worker

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ABSTRACT

Background: Caring is a universally accepted concept attributed to the nursing profession despite its many nebulous and elusive interpretations. Nursing is seen primarily as a feminine occupation, people get surprised when they see and hear about a male nurse. It is one of the few professions where women outnumber men greatly as it deals with care and nurture. This study aims to assess the female nurse attitude at male nurses in Nepal.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Biratnagar, Morang from the month of March to May 2023. Ethical clearance was obtained from IRC of Nobel Medical College Teaching Hospital, Biratnagar. Web-based computerized data were collected among 200 female nurses using whats app and Messenger. Data were collected using the Likert scale (AMnQ), which is a standardized 5-point Likert scale that assesses female nurses' attitudes toward male nurses. SPSSV 23 was used to analyze the data using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Results: In this study, more than half (55.0%) of the nurses have low-level attitudes toward male nurses. Furthermore, nearly half (48.5%) disagree nursing is suitable only for females, More than one-third (36.5%) disagree nursing is considered a low-level occupation for males, half of them (50%) strongly disagree male and female nurses both are equally required in the nursing profession and (35%) agrees people do not prefer to send males for the nursing profession.

Conclusions: Thus the study concludes that majority of the female nurses have low attitude towards male nurses. Therefore, it can be considered as an initiation for having a conversation regarding making gender equality in nursing and creating awareness about the roles and their importance in this profession.

Keywords Attitude; female nurse; male nurse.

INTRODUCTION

Nursing existed from the very beginning in Nepal, as a mother and a woman at home who provided nursing care to the sick, injured, and old. Since then nursing passed through many phases from untouchability to today as a profession.¹ From 1986 A.D, all certified nursing programs enrolled 10% of males in their program that stopped after 4 batches of intake^{1,2} and then after decades of gap Nepal Nursing Council (NNC) enroll male students in nursing programs from the academic year 2018/19 (July), allocating 15% quota for males after being pressurized by International Council for Nurses (ICN) to make nursing as a gender equality profession and also after the need felt due to devastating earthquake in 2015 AD.^{3,4} The study aims to assess female nurse attitude toward male nurses and to compare the attitude of hospital and academic institution working

nurses in Nepal.

METHODS

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 female nurses working in Biratnagar, Morang of Nepal of different hospitals and health institutions. Data was collected using convenience sampling technique through web-based data collection i.e. sending through messenger and whats app till the sample size was met, in the month of March to May 2023. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRC) of Nobel Medical College Teaching Hospital, Biratnagar. Informed consent was obtained before data collection from each participant from those who meet the eligibility criteria. The sample size was obtained using Cohen's formula and purposive sampling technique. The

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questionnaire consists of two parts. Part I consists of socio-demographic variables, and Part II consists of 5 point Likert scale i.e. Attitude towards men in nursing Profession (AMnQ),⁵ is a standard tool for which formal permission was obtained before data collection. It contains 15 statements where the participants have to rate the scale item from 1=strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= neutral, 4=disagree, and 5 =strongly disagree. In this scale items no. 8, 9, 10, and 11 are negatively framed, which will be scored in reverse order. The score range from 15 to 75 and the score categories are poor attitude = (15-49), neutral attitude =(50-59), and good attitude =(60-75).⁶

Collected data were transferred to Microsoft Excel, and checked for completeness, consistency, and accuracy. The confidentiality and anonymity of data were maintained. Data cleaning and coding were done. Then it was transferred to the statistical package for the social science (SPSS) version 23 software for further analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the majority (61%) of the participants belonged to the age group below 25 years. Likewise, nearly half of the participants were having PCL (46%) education and a majority of them belonged to the staff nurse (74.5%) group. Similarly, the majority of them (85%) were working in hospitals, (56.5%) of them had above 1 year of experience and almost half (49.5%) of them have income less than expenditure. Likewise, a majority (71.5%) were unmarried, more than half (51.5%) were residing in their own houses and more than half (57.5%) of them were satisfied with their jobs.

Table 1. Socio-demographic variables of female nurses.

Variables (n=200)	Number (%)
Age in years	
Below 25yrs	122 (61.0)
25yrs and above	78 (39.0)
Educational level	
Proficiency level certificate	92 (46.0)

Table 1. Socio-demographic variables of female nurses.

Bachelor's degree	87 (43.5)
Master degree	21 (10.5)
Designation	
Staff Nurse	149 (74.5)
In charge nurse	21 (10.5)
Supervisor	4 (2.0)
Instructor	8 (4.0)
Lecturer and above	15 (7.5)
Administrative	3 (1.5)
Working area	
Hospital	170 (85.0)
Academic/ institution	30 (15.0)
Working experience	
Below 1yrs	87 (43.5)
1yrs and above	113 (56.5)
Income status	
Equal to expenses	88 (44.0)
More than expenses	13 (6.5)
Less than expenses	99 (49.5)
Marital status	
Married	56 (28.0)
Unmarried	143 (71.5)
Separated/divorced	1 (0.5)
Residing place	
Own house	109 (54.5)
Rented house	82 (41.0)
Relative house	9 (4.5)
Are you satisfied with your job?	
Yes	115 (57.5)
No	85 (42.5)

Table 2. Female nurse attitude towards male nurses. n=200

Statements	SA	A	N	D	SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
People prefer to be cared for by female nurses only	9(4.5)	50(25)	21(10.5)	42(21)	78(39)
Nursing is suitable only for the females	8(4)	9(4.5)	29(14.5)	97(48.5)	57(28.5)
Male patients also prefer to be cared by female nurses only	24(12)	28(14)	34(17)	87(43.5)	27(13.5)
Nursing is considered a low-level occupation for the males	21(10.5)	35(17.5)	34(17)	73(36.5)	37(18.5)
Nursing is considered purely a female profession	26(13)	44(22)	27(13.5)	57(28.5)	46(23)
Hospitals prefer to appoint female nurses	45(22.5)	70(35)	35(17.5)	37(18.5)	13(6.5)
Nursing is a very challenging and frustrating occupation for males	12(6)	58(29)	48(24)	53(26.5)	29(14.5)
Male nurses are more supportive and helpful in a crisis	27(13.5)	42(21)	54(27)	65(32.5)	12(6)
Male nurses are more confident and technically sound than female nurses	43(21.5)	54(27)	37(18.5)	33(16.5)	33(16.5)
Male and female nurses both are equally required in the nursing profession	17(8.5)	23(11.5)	23(11.5)	37(18.5)	100(50)
Male nurses are more suitable for some of the hospital units such as psychiatry, emergency, operation theater, and critical care units	14(7)	32(16)	46(23)	63(31.5)	45(22.5)
People do not prefer to send males to the nursing profession	24(12)	70(35)	41(20.5)	49(24.5)	16(8)
Female patients do not prefer to be cared by male nurses	25(12.5)	60(30)	19(9.5)	20(10)	76(38)
Female nurses are more caring and tender heart than male nurses	23(11.5)	51(25.5)	48(24)	49(24.5)	29(14.5)
Female nurses are more polite and courteous in patient care	31(15.5)	56(28)	31(15.5)	28(14)	54(27)

Table 2 illustrates that more than one-third (39%) of female nurses strongly disagree that people prefer to be cared for by female nurses only, nearly half (48.5%) disagree nursing is suitable only for females and more than half (43.5%) disagrees male patients also prefer to be cared by the female nurses only. More than one-third (36.5%) disagree nursing is considered a low-level occupation for males, and more than one-fourth (28.5%) disagree nursing is considered purely a female profession. (35%) agree hospitals prefer to appoint female nurses, (29%) agree nursing is a very challenging and frustrating occupation for males, and (32.5%) disagree male nurses are more supportive and helpful in a crisis. More than one-fourth (27%) agree male nurses are more confident and technically sound than female nurses. Half of them (50%) strongly disagree male and female nurses both are equally required in the nursing profession, and around one-third (31.5%) disagree male nurses are more suitable for some of the hospital units such as psychiatry, emergency, operation theater, and critical care units, and (35%) agrees with people do not prefer to send males for the nursing profession. More than one-third (38%) disagree that female patients do not prefer to be cared for by male nurses, around one-fourth (25.5%) agree female nurses are more caring and tender heart than male nurses, and (28%) agree female nurses are more polite and courteous in patient care.

Figure 1 illustrates that the majority (67%) of female nurses have low attitudes toward male nurses, 30% were neutral and only (3 %) had high of attitudes toward male nurses.

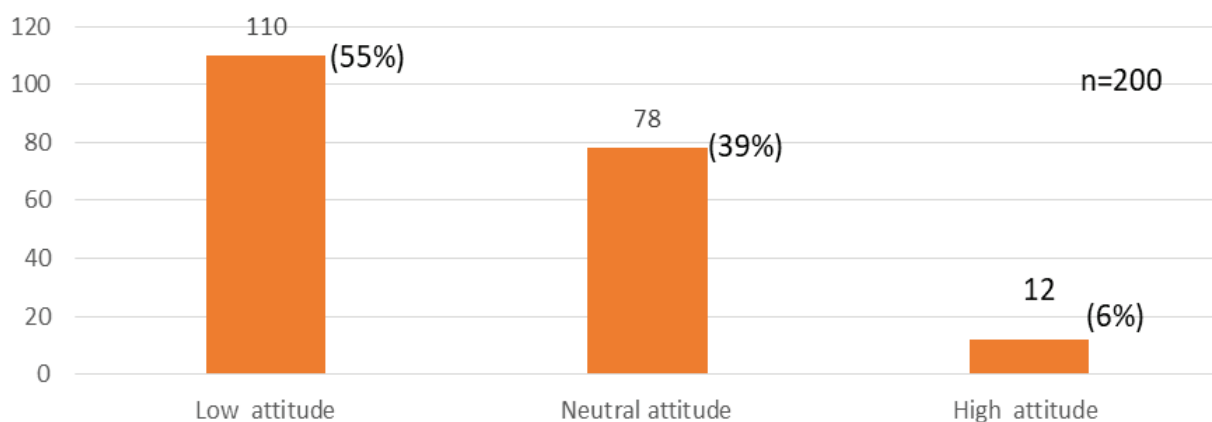


Figure 1. Level of female nurse attitude toward male nurses.

Table 3. Comparison of Female nurse attitudes working in a hospital with working in an academic institution. n=200

Observation	Mean	Mean difference	Standard deviation	t- value	P- value	Remarks
Female nurses working in Hospital	1.52	0.051	0.618	0.421	0.423	Not significant
Female nurses working in an academic institution	1.47	0.051	0.571			

Table 3 shows that the mean score for nurses working in hospitals is 1.52 ± 0.051 and for those working in academic institutions is 1.47 ± 0.051 . The result shows that this is no significant difference between the attitude of the two groups ($t=0.421$, $p=0.423$). Thus it concludes that there is no difference in the attitude towards male nurses whether female nurses are working in a hospital or academic institution setting.

Table 4. Ordinal Logistic Regression of female nurse attitude towards male nurses.

n=200

Covariates	Model OR	95% CI	p-value
Age	1.008	.087- .103	.868
Marital status	.000	15.296- -1.097	.024
Educational level	.897	6.376- 6.160	.973
Income status	.726	3.331- 2.689	.835
Religion	.002	12.723- .086	.053
Designation	90.415	.429- 9.438	.074
Working department	.000	33.047- -1.329	.034
Working experience	.922	194- .032	.159
Residing place	.826	5.181- 4.798	.940
Job satisfaction	200.413	.474- 11.075	.072
Goodness of fit test			
-2Log likelihood ratio 332.649			
Test of parallel lines 312.321			

$P < 0.05$. OR- odds ratio; CI- Class Interval

Although Figure 1 it has shown that 110(55%) female nurses have a low attitude toward male nurses still female nurses' job satisfaction and designation have significant predictors of their attitude toward male nurses. Female nurses having job satisfaction (OR 200.413, 95% CI= .474 - 11.075) and designation (90.415, 95% CI= .429-9.43) had higher odds of having a positive attitude towards male nurses (table 4).

DISCUSSIONS

The study shows that more than one-third (39%) of female nurses strongly disagree that people prefer to be cared for by female nurses only, and a half (48.5%) disagree nursing is suitable only for females is similar to the study by Ashkenazi L et al. conducted at public university of Isreal in 2016 with ($t=0.82$, $p<.05$)⁷ and more than half (43.5%) disagree male patients also prefer to be cared for by female nurses only. More than one-third (36.5%) disagree nursing is considered a low-level occupation for males is similar to the finding by Wang H et al. conducted at a university in Changsha, China 2010,⁸ and more than one-fourth (28.5%) disagree nursing is considered purely a female profession. (35%) agree hospitals prefer to appoint female nurses, (29%) agree nursing is a very challenging and frustrating occupation for males is somewhat similar to the findings conducted by Dafny HA et al. at a regional public hospital in Queensland Australia 2020,⁹ and (32.5%) disagree male nurses are more supportive and helpful in a crisis. More than one-fourth (27%) agree male nurses are more confident and technically sound than female nurses. Half of them (50%) strongly disagree male and female nurses both are equally required in the nursing profession, and around one-third (31.5%) disagree male nurses are more suitable for some of the hospital units such as psychiatry, emergency, operation theater, and critical care units which is similar to the study by Taher Alghabashi M et al. conducted at Umm AL-Qura University, Saudi Arabia (2022) with $p<0.005$,¹⁰ and (35%) agrees with people do not prefer to send males for the nursing profession. More than one-third (38%) disagree that female patients do not prefer to be cared for by male nurses is in contrast to the qualitative study conducted by Brian Keogh et al. 2006, to assess Caring for female patients: the experiences of male nurses.¹¹ Nearly around one-fourth (25.5%) agree female nurses are more caring and tender heart than male nurses, and (28%) agree female nurses are more polite and courteous in patient care which is similar to the study by Bartfay JW et al. conducted at Ontario in 2010.¹² and is also consistent with the study by Subba R et al. at Bharatpur, Chitwan Nepal, 2021 among high school students.⁸

It also illustrates that female nurses have low attitudes (55%), 30% were neutral and only (6 %) had good attitudes toward male nurses which are similar to the study done at the Iranian University of Medical Sciences, 2022 with a mean value of 35.11 ± 6.15 .¹⁰ and is in contrast to the study by Subba R et al. at Bharatpur, Chitwan Nepal, 2021 among high school students (52.3%)¹³ and by Khatri A et al. 2022, (65.3%) have a positive attitude.³

The mean score for nurses working in hospitals is 1.52 ± 0.051 and for those working in academic institutions is 1.47 ± 0.051 which shows that this is no significant difference between the attitude of female nurses working in a hospital or academic institution setting ($t=0.421$, $p=0.423$) which is similar to the study by Stephanie A, 2018 of male nurse acceptance of gender with ($t=0.07$, $p=0.32$)¹⁴ and by Barrett-Landau S et al. Men in Nursing: Their Influence in a Female Dominated Career (2014).¹⁵

The ordinal binary regression shows female nurses having job satisfaction (OR 200.413, 95% CI= .474 - 11.075) and designation (90.415, 95% CI= .429-9.43) had higher odds of having a positive attitude towards male nurses which is contrast to the study by Myron D. Fottler et al. at conducted at Western New York with position held ($r=-.215$), 2014.¹⁶

As the study is limited to only one district, it can be conducted in various different settings to find out the attitude of Nurses in all parts of Nepal and the Education Ministry and hospital management should plan and implement awareness regarding gender equality among nursing profession.

CONCLUSIONS

The study suggests that there are very few female nurses having a good attitude toward male nurses and job satisfaction and designation are the highest predictors of good attitude toward male nurses.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author reports no conflict of interest

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