



# Nurses' Attitude Towards the Care of Narcotic Patients in Yasuj in 2014

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Regarding an increase in the number of drug addicts seems that their admission to hospital for various medical reasons is inevitable and, furthermore, nurses' attitudes can be influenced by the quality of nursing care. Therefore, this study is aimed to determine the attitude of nurses in the care of drug dependent patients. **Methods:** This is a descriptive correlational study. A sample of size (n= 200) was selected using quota sampling. A researcher made questionnaire was used to collect information. The questionnaire was structured in two sections: demographic information and attitude (20 items). The validity of the questionnaire was determined by content validity and its reliability by test and retest method (0.86%). Data were analyzed by two descriptive and inferential statistical methods. **Results:** According to the findings of this study, there is not a significant relationship between attitude and demographic factors of nurses; that is, the attitude is not affected by demographic characteristics. The one t-test sample showed that the studied subjects had a positive attitude. The attitude score of over 60 samples was 96.7%. **Conclusion:** Although the majority of nurses in this study had a positive attitude, it is necessary to pay more attention to the issues of substance dependence in high education courses and in-service training, in order to strengthen the positive attitude towards the health promotion.

**Key Words:** Attitude, Nurse, Drug-Dependent Patients.

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## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of drug dependence and addiction has today become a major global problem, which has drawn the attention of many thinkers and scholars as the fourth issue of the crisis after the nuclear crisis, population explosion and environmental pollution. Drug abuse and substance dependence were termed as drug addiction until before 1964; however, after the World Health Organization proposal to reduce the social burden, the terms of abuse and substance dependence were used in place of addiction word [1]. At present, 6.3% to 9.6% of adults (15-64 year olds) are affected by illicit drugs. According to the World Drug Report 2013, the number of drug users has increased (at 18%) since 2008 [2]. According to Iran's *counter-narcotics headquarters* in 2009, the total number of drug addicts in the country has been estimated less than one million and two hundred thousand people and the number of recreational drug users was eight hundred thousand

people [3]. Millions of dollars are spent annually on drug trafficking or the treatment as well as maintenance of drug dependent persons in different countries. According to the *world health organization (WHO) report 2004, Iran ranked first among countries around the world regarding the tendency towards drug abuse* [4]. The results of the study by Rochet et al. showed that patients with drug dependent treatment requirements have a greater chance of hospitalization (81%) than those with non-drug-dependent treatment requirements [5]. *Nurses are key members of primary health care teams in general practice. The services rendered by nurses are of vital importance for the survival and patient's well-being* [6]. In addition, according to some reports, some factors including *nurses' attitudes* can play a role in the quality of care [7]. Nurses might be influenced by the society's views and stigmatization of vulnerable population of addicted patients, which could result in a reduction in the nursing care quality [8]. Stanbrooke

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believes that *addiction is a chronic reversing disease* that needs to be *treated like other diseases*. Therefore, if most *healthcare professionals* agree that *addiction is a disease*, then they should change their attitude toward addicts, implying that their thinking, attitude and performance should be the same as other patients towards these patients [9]. Attitudes are described as our bad and good feelings about something. It also refers to a favorable or unfavorable evaluative reaction toward something or someone exhibited in ones beliefs, feelings, or intended behavior [10]. The purpose of studying attitudes is to influence performance, because a variety of attitudes is known as indicators or predictors of behavior. Powerful attitudes, or those of a person's favorite, are more strongly related to performance than those weak and irrelevant attitudes [11]. Boyle et al. also indicated that nurses' attitudes could have a direct impact on the patient's well-being and their performance in providing health care; whereas, nurses are expected to treat a wide range of people or patients with different medical conditions without any prejudice and discrimination [12]. The findings of a study by Retoo et al. also revealed that nurses with a lower educational level hold a more positive attitude than those with higher academic qualifications [13]. In another study by Islami and colleagues in Isfahan, it was found that in order to change the attitude of students, it seems necessary to provide some training, so that they can not only improve their performance, but also prevent the impact of the attitudes of educated people in society [14]. Since the issue of substance abuse and addiction in the educational programs of nursing students *has not received much attention* so far compared to other chronic diseases, it is likely that nursing graduates might not have enough knowledge about the subject while entering the clinical field. The lack of training programs and sufficient knowledge expose them to the negative attitude towards these patients. Considering the importance of the issue, the author of this study sought to examine the attitude of nurses towards offering nursing care to substance dependent patients. Nurses' attitude clearly influences their care manner and professional competence, and therefore, they should have a positive attitude towards their dependent patients in order to increase their knowledge and skills in the field of "addiction nursing".

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive-correlation study, which was conducted for 6 months from July to October 2014. The research population consisted of all working nurses in public hospitals (n = 400) in Yasuj. A sample of size (n= 200) was selected using quota sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect information. Of

the 200 questionnaires that were distributed among the sample subjects, 182 questionnaires were fully completed and were analyzed statistically. The questionnaire was structured in two general sections. The first section was related to demographic characteristics including sex, age, education, job position, work experience, ward and hospital of the place of service of subjects under study. The second section included 20 items regarding the attitude of nurses in the provision of care to drug addicted patients in a 5 point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree; disagree; neither agree nor disagree; agree; Strongly agree*. The answers to each item range from 1-5. Nurses' Attitude Survey was scored by taking into account the terms and then calculating by the addition of the term scores, so that a score of 5 indicates a strong agreement with positive load and a score of 1 indicates a strong disagreement and a reverse score for a phrase with negative load. The scientific validity of the questionnaire was determined using content validity and scientific reliability achieved by the test-retest method. Its correlation coefficient was obtained 0.86% as well. For data collection and sample selection, in order to comply with the research ethical requirements, the *anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were assured*. Then the questionnaires with a consent form were given to participants and were returned after completion. Data collected by questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software version 21.

## FINDINGS

In order to achieve the first objective of the study, i.e. "Determining the individual characteristics of subjects", statistical analysis of the data obtained from the samples showed that the highest percentage of the samples were in the age group of 25-29 (39%), female (75.3%), married (68.1%), expert (93.4%), ordinary job category (90.7%), work experience less than 5 years (48.9%), respectively. According to the results of Table 1 in relation to the second objective of the study, there is a significant difference between the attitudes of the studied subjects at the level of  $P < 0.001$  in the care of drug-dependent patients admitted to the public hospitals of Yasuj ( a *cutting-point of 60* was selected to compare respondents' perspective).

**Table 1: Comparison of attitude of nurses in the care of drug dependent patients**

Statistics Variable	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Difference between the meanings	t-value	df	significance level
Nurse's attitudes	182	69.19	9.06	9.20	69.13	181	0.001

Table 2 shows the status of the studied subject's attitudes. Based on the results, the attitude score of the majority of the studied subjects was higher than the cut line (60).

**Table 2: Status of nurses' attitude toward drug addicts**

Statistics	Number	Percent
Nurse's attitude level		
Low (less than 60.13)	6	3.3 %
Medium (Between 60.13 to 78.25)	154	84.6 %
Very high (more than 78.25)	22	12.1 %

## DISCUSSION

According to the results, the highest percentage of the samples were in the age group of 25-29 (39%), female, married, expert, ordinary job category and work experience less than 5 years, respectively. This finding is in line with the results of Tabiei studies, as well as those of Jahromi et al. [15-17]. Having a positive attitude about the same unit is one of the main pillars of any kind of service. The results of this study indicated a positive attitude among nurses toward providing nursing care for drug-dependent patients. The Morgan study also showed that nurses have a positive attitude towards substance-dependent patients [18]. In addition, the results of a study by Ghadamgahie and colleagues revealed that 90.4% of the samples held a positive attitude towards the perceived threats of nosocomial infections [19]. It is necessary for nurses, who have a relationship with substance-dependent patients, to take the utmost care and attention in terms of their attitude and practice towards such individuals, so that they can establish a positive relationship with them using their science and art, and improve the therapeutic effects, because the nurse's attitude, as carer of drug-dependent people, can help them to accelerate their treatment trend. Fortunately, the results indicate that an *increase* and *improvement in nurses' knowledge* in relation to such patients leads to an enhancement of their attitudes because having knowledge about each subject enhances their attitudes towards that subject and the proper responsibility to fulfill undertakings required to take a positive attitude and outlook regarding that topic [20]. Based on the results of this research, due to an increase in their knowledge and improving sense of internal responsibility of their patients, nurses establish a relationship with a positive attitude and try to improve it. Establishing a good nurse-patient relationship based on positive attitudes could make a significant contribution to retaining and caring of the patient while confronting with emotional problems [21]. That is, if nurses have a professional attitude towards their task as a nurse and act professionally, this coordination in attitude and practice could be beneficial for them. Therefore, in order to achieve better results, it is suggested that similar research is done in other groups of nurses for

generalization. The sample size of this study was small and done in just one area, so more extensive studies seem to be necessary.

## CONCLUSION

The significance of patient care has not been considered much as an important aspect of nursing science. The positive attitude of nurses towards patient care can have a significant effect on their proper performance in this regard. Therefore, regarding to the importance of influencing the attitude of nurses in patient care and the lack of adequate nursing education programs, holding different conferences in the field of attitude and protection of client's rights, in-service training, seminars, as well as attention to substance dependence issues in higher education programs are worthy of consideration.

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