

Knowledge and Selected Practices of Paid Bystanders Regarding Patient Care and Personal Protection in Colombo-North Teaching Hospital, Ragama, Sri Lanka

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The dearth of studies on paid bystanders who figure prominently in caregiving for inward patients in Sri Lankan hospitals led us to assess their knowledge and selected practices regarding patient care and personal protection, to aid their professional improvement. Ninety-two participants were cross-sectionally assessed, using an interviewer-administered questionnaire at Colombo-North Teaching Hospital (CNTH), a main referral centre in Sri Lanka. The median scores of the reference group comprising 15 nurses from CNTH were compared with that of the participants to determine the adequacy of knowledge and practices regarding patient care and personal protection. $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant. Females preponderate ($n=64$, 58.9%), 80 participants (86.7%) worked for a private agency and others were self-employed. Despite, 37 participants (40%) having a work experience of more than 3 years, the adequacy of knowledge regarding personal protection ($n=24$, 25.6%), and patient care ($n=2$, 2.2%) were very low. None of the participants had adequate practices regarding personal protection, and it was 34 (36.7%) for patient care. However, participants with longer durations of experience had better practices ($p < 0.001$), knowledge ($p < 0.001$) regarding patient care, and better practices regarding personal protection ($p < 0.001$). Those who were more educated had better practices regarding personal protection ($p=0.014$). As the knowledge and practices of paid bystanders regarding patient care and personal protection are unsatisfactory but are relatively higher in more experienced and more educated ones, a standard minimum period of training and a minimum level of education are recommended before employment.

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