

The Attitudes toward and Willingness to Work with Older People among Nurses at University Hospital, Kotelawala Defence University (UHKDU), Sri Lanka

RT Balachandra^{1#}, RAP Hansamali¹, SM Dhananjaya¹, WPIP Premarathna¹, HSMK Wijesiri¹ and S Rathnayake²

¹*Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka*

#tharushibalachandra@gmail.com

Due to the fact that older people are more prone to chronic illnesses and disabilities, there is an increasing need for nurses with positive attitudes and a willingness to work with them. In this study, nurses at University Hospital Kotelawala Defence University (UHKDU), in Sri Lanka, were asked about their attitudes toward and willingness to work with older people. A descriptive cross-sectional study was done among the nurses at UHKDU. A purposive sample of 267 nurses completed a self-administered questionnaire consisting of socio-demographic variables, Kogan's attitudes scale and questions related to willingness to work with older people. In data analysis, descriptive statistics and Pearson's chi-squared test were used. The majority were female (71.9%) and held slightly negative (58%) and slightly positive (41.9%) attitudes. The majority (46.4%) reported little interest to work with older people. The factors associated with attitudes were gender ($p < 0.001$), age ($p < 0.001$), working experience ($p < 0.001$), residence ($p < 0.001$), educational level ($p < 0.001$), family structure ($p < 0.001$) and family income ($p < 0.001$). Gender ($p < 0.001$), age ($p < 0.001$), working experience ($p < 0.001$), residence ($p < 0.001$), family structure ($p < 0.001$) and family income ($p = 0.002$) were associated with willingness to work with older people. Nurses express attitudes that range from slightly negative to positive and have a little interest in dealing with older people. Various socio-demographic factors have an impact on attitudes toward and willingness to work with older people. Since nurses are the primary caregivers for older people, interventions and methods are crucial to increasing their willingness to engage with older people.

Keywords: *attitudes, older people, willingness*