

Level of Knowledge and Practices on Healthy Lifestyle Among Nursing Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

Velmurugan R¹, Umadevi S², Menaga Gandhi³

^{1,2,3}Ph.D Nursing Scholar, Bharat Institute of Higher Education & Research

Abstract

Objective: Assess the level of knowledge and practices on healthy life style among nursing students in Tamilnadu. Students are more likely to experience academic success and personal development at institutions if they are successfully implementing the healthy lifestyle practices. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the association between knowledge and practices on healthy life style among nursing students.

Subjects and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted in Tamilnadu with 430 students. Data were collected using a self-made closed ended questionnaires to collect demographic data, knowledge, and practices on healthy lifestyle among students. Descriptive and Inferential statistics by using SPSS (version 20) and Microsoft Excel. Chi square test were used to find out the effectiveness of association between level of knowledge and practice on healthy lifestyle.

Results: The nursing students had 72.72 % Good knowledge on healthy lifestyle where as 52% of them had poor practices of healthy lifestyle. The type of food and year of study was found to have significant association with knowledge scores and occupation of parents, type of food and year of study was found to have significant association with practices of nursing students regarding Healthy lifestyle.

Conclusion: There was good level of knowledge regarding healthy lifestyle but poor practice on healthy lifestyle for Nursing college students in Tamilnadu.

Keywords: Knowledge, Practices, Healthy Lifestyle, Nursing, Students

Introduction:

Healthy lifestyle is a state of positive health behaviors being practiced for prevention of various disorders. Healthy lifestyle behaviors are very much helpful in health promotion. [1, 2] The non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become a significant global health challenge, accounting for a substantial burden of morbidity and mortality worldwide. [3] Many of these diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, certain cancers, chronic respiratory conditions, and obesity-related issues, are strongly linked to modifiable lifestyle factors. Initiatives promoting healthy eating habits, encouraging regular physical activity, tobacco and alcohol cessation programs, sleep hygiene education, and stress management techniques play a pivotal role in preventing these diseases. [4, 5]

College life indeed presents various challenges that can hinder the adoption of healthy practices among students. [6] Stress, time constraints, academic demands, and lifestyle changes often make it difficult for college students to prioritize healthy behaviors such as regular exercise and maintaining a balanced diet.

The context of preventive healthcare accurately reflects how our everyday behavioral patterns, shaped by various psychosocial, environmental, and to some extent genetic factors, greatly influence our health. Lifestyle encompasses the habitual behaviors we engage in daily, often unconsciously, and which can have profound effects on our well-being [7]

Encouraging a supportive environment that emphasizes the importance of physical activity, healthy eating habits, stress management, and overall well-being during medical education can help mitigate the risk of overweight and obesity among future healthcare professionals. [8] Promoting healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices among nursing students from the outset of their education is crucial. The university period often represents a phase where individuals are exposed to various new experiences and challenges, and it's a time when some may adopt risky behaviors that can negatively impact their health. [9]

Understanding the factors that significantly influence an individual's health-promoting lifestyle is essential, especially for nursing students who will play a crucial role in health education and promotion in clinical settings. Beyond basic knowledge, grasping the determinants that shape lifestyle choices can better inform nursing practice and interventions aimed at promoting healthier behaviors among patients and communities. [10]

Methods:

Study design:

A cross sectional study was conducted in selected Colleges of Chennai, Tamilnadu

Subjects:

A total of 430 college students were included in the study. The participants were selected through a Non probability convenient sampling technique. The inclusion criteria are the college students whose age group between 17 – 24 years studying B.Sc Nursing course and available in campus during the time of data collection.

Study tool:

A self-structured questionnaire was administered to collect demographic information from the participants. This included data on age, gender, religion, type of family, occupation of parents, monthly income of parents, living conditions, type of food, and year of study.

A self-structured multiple-choice questionnaire were used to assess the level of knowledge on healthy life style practices. A self-structured Dichotomous questionnaire was used to assess the level of practices on healthy lifestyle.

Data analysis:

Data analysis was done by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive analysis was presented with number and percentage, mean and standard deviation. Chi square test were used to find out the effectiveness of association between level of knowledge and practice on healthy lifestyle practices.

Results:

The study sample included a total of 430 B.Sc Nursing students. Most of them 45 % of the students belongs to the age group of 21-22 years, 89% were female category, 62% of them Hindu. Whereas, 61% of students belong to joint family, 46% of parents were working in private and 34% of family monthly income was Rs. 21000 – 40000. Nearly 56% of students living in urban area, 81% are non-vegetarian and 29% students studying in second year (Table 1).

Table:1 Demographic characteristics of the participants

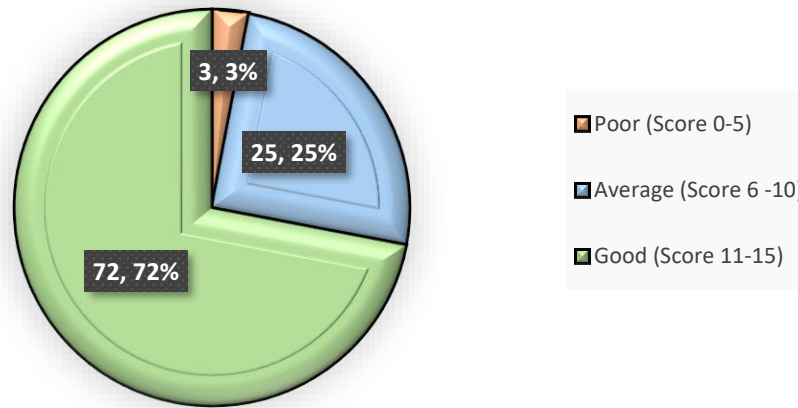
n=430

S. No	Demographic variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Age		
	17-18	56	13
	19-20	90	21
	21-22	194	45
	>22	90	21
2	Gender		
	Male	62	14
	Female	368	86
3	Religion		
	Hindu	265	62
	Muslim	56	13
	Christian	109	25
4	Type of family		
	Nuclear	167	39
	Joint	263	61
5	Occupation of parents		
	Govt. Job	145	34
	Private Job	198	46
	Daily wages	56	13
	Others	31	7
6	Monthly income of parents		
	Less than Rs. 20000	34	8
	Rs. 21000 - 40000	145	34
	Rs. 41000 - 50000	117	27
	More than Rs. 50000	134	31
7	Living conditions		
	Rural	189	44
	Urban	241	56
8	Type of food		
	Vegetarian	83	19
	Non vegetarian	347	81
9	Year of study		
	First Year	98	23
	Second Year	126	29
	Third Year	112	26
	Fourth Year	94	22

Results of knowledge among nursing students regarding healthy lifestyle revealed that nearly 72.72 % of nursing students had good knowledge, 25.25 % of them had average knowledge and 3.3 % of nursing students had poor knowledge regarding healthy life style (Figure 1).

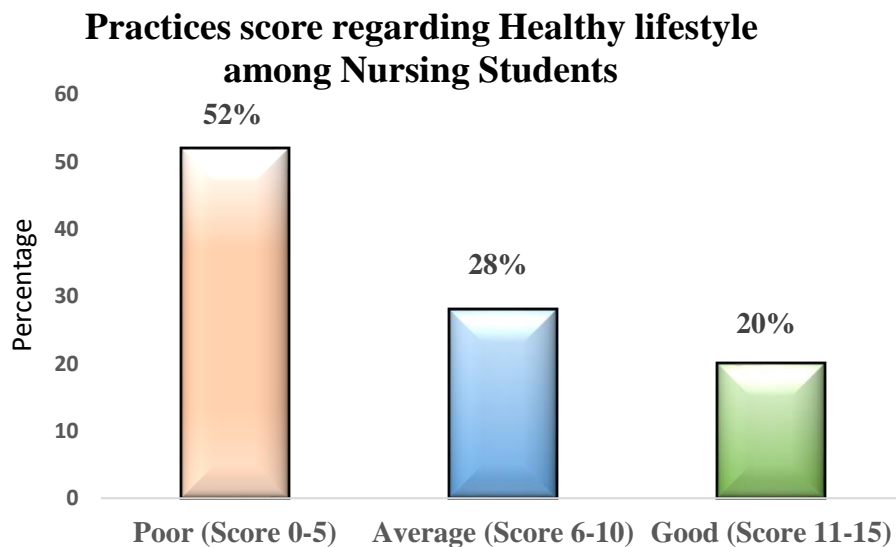
Fig. 1. Analysis of Knowledge regarding Healthy lifestyle among nursing students (n = 430).

Knowledge scores regarding healthy life style among Nursing students



Results of practices regarding healthy lifestyle among nursing students revealed that nearly Practices regarding healthy life style shows 52 % of the nursing students had poor Practices, 28% of them had average Practices, and 20% of them had good Practices regarding healthy life style (Figure 2).

Fig. 2. Analysis of practices regarding Healthy lifestyle among nursing students (n = 430)



The association of knowledge regarding healthy lifestyle among nursing students with demographic variable was assessed using Fishers exact test. Since p-value corresponding to type of food and year of study are small (less than 0.05), which was found to have significant association with knowledge of nursing students regarding Healthy lifestyle (Table 2).

Table:2. Association between Knowledge of healthy lifestyle among nursing students and socio demographic variables

n=430

S.No	Demographic Variable		Knowledge of Healthy Lifestyle			P-Value
			Poor	Average	Good	
1	Age	17 – 18	14	23	19	0.231 NS
		19 – 20	1	46	43	
		21 – 22	0	89	105	
		23 and above	0	41	49	
2	Gender	Male	1	32	29	0.343 NS
		Female	45	165	158	
3	Religion	Hindu	45	130	90	0.656 NS
		Muslim	0	33	23	
		Christian	0	54	55	
4	Type of Family	Nuclear	0	76	91	0.563 NS
		Joint	35	104	124	
5	Occupation of Parents	Govt Jobs	5	86	54	0.236 NS
		Private Jobs	39	64	95	
		Daily wages	0	23	33	
		Others	0	17	14	
6	Family Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 20000	0	18	16	0.534 NS
		Rs. 21000 – Rs. 40000	0	97	48	
		Rs. 41000 – Rs. 50000	4	56	57	
		More than Rs. 50000	6	68	60	
7	Living Area	Rural	3	99	87	0.638 NS
		Urban	24	109	108	
8	Type of Food	Vegetarian	0	38	45	0.013*
		Non-Vegetarian	45	137	165	
9	Year of Study	1 st Year	6	37	55	0.043*
		2 nd Year	14	59	53	
		3 rd Year	0	48	64	
		4 th Year	0	40	54	

Whereas, the association of practices regarding healthy lifestyle among nursing students with demographic variable corresponding to occupation of parents, type of food and year of study are small (less than 0.05), which was found to have significant association with practices of nursing students regarding Healthy lifestyle (Table 3).

Table:2. Association between practice of healthy lifestyle among nursing students and socio demographic variables

n=430

S.No	Demographic Variable		Practices of Healthy Lifestyle			P-Value
			Poor	Average	Good	
1	Age	17 – 18	24	18	14	0.231 NS
		19 – 20	20	67	3	
		21 – 22	90	80	24	
		23 and above	36	54	0	
2	Gender	Male	24	25	13	0.343 NS
		Female	162	141	65	
3	Religion	Hindu	124	87	54	0.656 NS
		Muslim	27	29	0	
		Christian	62	45	2	
4	Type of Family	Nuclear	49	67	51	0.563 NS
		Joint	125	104	34	
5	Occupation of Parents	Govt Jobs	82	34	29	0.0732*
		Private Jobs	101	75	22	
		Daily wages	38	18	0	
		Others	18	13	0	
6	Family Monthly Income	Less than Rs. 20000	13	20	1	0.534 NS
		Rs. 21000 – Rs. 40000	73	66	6	
		Rs. 41000 – Rs. 50000	50	67	0	
		More than Rs. 50000	56	45	33	
7	Living Area	Rural	78	84	27	0.638 NS
		Urban	24	109	108	
8	Type of Food	Vegetarian	45	38	0	0.038*
		Non-Vegetarian	176	112	59	
9	Year of Study	1 st Year	65	33	0	0.049*
		2 nd Year	61	63	2	
		3 rd Year	7	45	60	
		4 th Year	12	45	37	

Discussion:

The knowledge and practice on healthy lifestyle are very important to determine a good growth and mental development for students at the tertiary level. It is well established that a healthy lifestyle is of benefit in the prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases such as hypertension, cancer, asthma and promotion of

well beings. Imbalanced nutrition, physical inactivity, tobacco use and the use of alcohol and illicit drugs are among identified lifestyle-related risk factors

The present study showed that majority of nursing students has good knowledge (72.72%) regarding healthy lifestyle but poor practices (52%) regarding healthy lifestyle. A study on Nutritional knowledge among medical students done T King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia reported that 75%-94% of the students were aware of the composition of balanced diet, identification of the healthiest frying method, identification of the healthiest eating behavior, importance of vitamins and minerals consumption and the meaning of organic food. (Eman Mokbel Alissa). A similar study conducted on lifestyle practices among Malaysian students stated that more than half of the participants were physically inactive (53.7%) and concluded that a poor practice of healthy lifestyle among university students [11]

Association of knowledge regarding healthy lifestyle among nursing students corresponding to type of food and year of study are small (less than 0.05), which was found significant association with knowledge scores of Healthy lifestyles. A contradictory study found regarding life style modification and stated that Individuals who participate in co-curricular activities ($p < 0.001$) show a significant relation. Daily water intake and management of stress illustrate an insignificant association ($p = 0.07$) and ($p = 0.302$) [12] The nursing students are communicating with patients and other healthcare professionals while working in hospital set-up. If the students have low level of knowledge, they will not be able to communicate with patients regarding healthy lifestyle. Sometimes low level of knowledge can affect lifestyle practices.

The practices regarding healthy lifestyle among nursing students with demographic showed the occupation of parents, type of food and year of study are small (less than 0.05), and have a significant association with practices of nursing students. The more or less similar study done on knowledge and Practice of healthy lifestyle pattern among non-teaching staff with demographic variable Education and Monthly income were small (less than 0.05), and were found to have significant association with practices of healthy lifestyle of non-teaching staff [13] The nurse students who have high level of knowledge and healthy lifestyle practices will perform well in curricular and extra-curricular activities. In nursing education, it is important to improve level of healthy lifestyle practices of student nurses by improving their knowledge to avoid difficulties in hospital and college

Conclusion:

It appears that the study findings suggest a disparity between the knowledge and practices of healthy lifestyle patterns among nursing students. While they may possess good knowledge, their actual practices seem to be poor. The observation that having good knowledge alone is not sufficient for maintaining good healthy style highlighted. To address this gap and promote better health among nursing students, the study recommends that efforts should be directed towards improving both knowledge and practices of healthy lifestyle. Specifically, the goal is to enhance their behavior by ensuring that they not only understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle but also incorporate these practices into their daily lives.

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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