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A survey of knowledge and attitude of oncology nurses toward pain in United Arab Emirates, Oncology setting

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Introduction: Effective cancer pain management mandates precise attitude, assessment, skills, and knowledge. Health professionals' knowledge and attitudes concerning cancer pain management have often been referred to as insufficient. This study explored pain knowledge and attitudes of nurses working in Oncology settings.

Population: Population includes 115 oncology nurses working at two hospitals in the United Arab Emirates.

Methods: A descriptive, correlational, cross-sectional design was used to examine nurse knowledge and attitudes about pain using the Nurses' Attitude and Knowledge Survey Regarding Pain (NKASRP) survey. NKASRP score differences were examined among nurses with varying demographics, levels of pain education and experience.

Results: The mean KASRP was 45%, significantly below the passing score of 80%. Pain management education was not found to have a significant impact on KASRP thus suggesting the need for more effective educational approaches to developing appropriate knowledge and attitudes towards pain among the nurses. No significant differences between sex, educational level, nursing and oncology experience, and nationality or religion were found.

Interpretation & Conclusions: The study highlights the need for new initiatives targeting nurses working with cancer patients who are likely to experience significant pain. An ongoing need exists for more effective evidence-based educational programs in cancer pain management. Interactive teaching strategies such as on the job training, improves, and case studies should be tested for their influence on pain knowledge and attitudes and patient outcomes.