

Original Research Article

Knowledge and awareness of the medical students about injuries in forensic perspective

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Abstract: Injuries can occur due to various reasons. It can occur accidentally or self-inflicted or caused by the other persons. Examination of such injuries can provide important data for the management as well as for the medico-legal purposes. Medical students are constantly exposed to these injuries and thus they must be aware about it. This study was done to study the knowledge and awareness of the medical students about forensic perspectives of various types of injuries. The study was done with the help of specially prepared questionnaires. The students of third and final year were participated in the study. The medical students were told to gather in the lecture hall, told about the subject and only the students willing to participate in the study were given the questionnaire and their responses were collected. Total 128 medical students were participated in the study. In general the medical students have knowledge and awareness about the various types of injuries and its forensic perspectives. Out of 128 medical students, 72 were male students and 56 were female students. 112 (87.5%) medical students were aware of the forensic sciences and its importance in the medical field. Though the knowledge and awareness of the medical students were sufficient, there were certain areas which were lacking in information.

Keywords: Injury, Forensic pathology, Medical students.

INTRODUCTION:

The term wound or injury has meaning that the skin or mucosa is completely breached. It is more important for those who were documenting injuries or wound.¹ The key part of the work of any forensic pathologist or the forensic physician is the ability to assess appropriately, document clearly and interpret accurately the injuries which were occurred [1]. Medical practitioners need frequently to do examination of the victims and issue medicolegal reports. Law enforcing officers may also send the wounded victims for routine examination, treatment and necessarily for medicolegal reports of the cases. Occasionally the victims from their selves can request the attending medical doctors to issue medical certificates and reports which can be needed for their future referral. This is

why the medical practitioners have to use their medical knowledge and skill regarding injuries [2].

The interpretation and the assessment of the injury depends on taking proper history, undertaking an appropriate physical examination and recording of all the relevant findings [1]. This study was done to study the knowledge and awareness of the medical students about forensic perspectives of various types of injuries.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The study was done with the help of specially prepared questionnaires, the validity of which was checked by doing pilot study. The questionnaires were consisting of knowledge of forensic sciences, various types of injuries, history taking, the importance of knowledge of these types of injuries, etc. The students

of third and final year were participated in the study. Approval of the ethical committee was done before study started. Informed consent was taken from all the participants. The medical students were told to gather in the lecture hall, told about the subject and only the students willing to participate in the study were given the questionnaire and their responses were collected.

RESULTS:

Total 128 medical students were participated in the study. In general the medical students have knowledge and awareness about the various types of injuries and its forensic perspectives. Out of 128 medical students, 72 were male students and 56 were female students. 112 (87.5%) medical students were aware of the forensic sciences and its importance in the medical field. Knowledge of different types of injuries was present with 108 (84.37%) students. But, the history taking for the injury was lacking with the students and its knowledge was present with 59 (46.09%) students.

DISCUSSION:

The definition of physical injury in the forensic medical sciences is “damage to any part of the body due to the deliberate or accidental application of mechanical or other traumatic agent” [3]. Injury is created when the intensity of the force applied to the body exceeds the capability of the tissue to resist or adapt the force. The capability of the tissue to adapt or resist the force depends on velocity, mass, exact area of the weapon pressing the body, structure of the tissue, mode of application of the applied force such as compression, torsion, traction, tangent and leverage of the stress. Type of damage of the tissue governed by on the degree of transfer of the kinetic energy from the relative movement of the weapon and/or the body [2].

The purpose of assessment and documentation is for the contribution in establishing how the injury is caused. These skills should be within the remit of any doctor, but they are rarely done fully and appropriately. The interpretation of the reasons of injuries can be best undertaken by forensic expertise, because there may be many factors involved in such interpretation. Because interpretation of wounds and injuries may be undertaken by review of documents, for example body chart mapping, written descriptions, or photographs, it is commanding that the descriptions are understandable to all [1].

Wounds are commonly classified on the basis of the method of causation and their appearance [2]. Different injuries or wounds have different

characteristics and can easily be identified. Type and characteristics of wounds can indicate the type of weapons. The weapons can be metallic, fibrous, wooden, and stone-like and even the parts of the body of the offender, like teeth, nails, feet, palm, hand fist, fingers, elbows and knees [2].

Study by Giannakopoulos GF *et al.*; [4] done study to assess the knowledge of inflicted injuries of domestic violence and found that it should be improved among healthcare providers. Our study showed that the medical students were having knowledge and awareness about the injuries and its documentation, but still it needs to be improved. On the basis of the various medical findings present at the time of examination, report is usually given containing category of wound, type of weapon used, age or time of injury and whether self-inflicted or caused by the other, etc [2].

CONCLUSION:

The medical students were having good knowledge of the forensic perspectives of the injury, but certain areas shows lack of awareness. Therefore it needs to be improved and the students should be updated with the recent knowledge and awareness.

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