

Prenatal Genetic Screening and Counselling Competency Challenges of Nurse-Midwife

Authors : Girija Madhavanprabhakaran, Frincy Franacis, Sheeba Elizabeth John

Abstract : Introduction: A wide range of prenatal genetic screening is introduced with increasing incidences of congenital anomalies even in low-risk pregnancies and is an emerging standard of care. Being frontline caretakers, the role and responsibilities of nurses and midwives are critical as they are working along with couples to provide evidence-based supportive educative care. The increasing genetic disorders and advances in prenatal genetic screening with limited genetic counselling facilities urge nurses and midwifery nurses with essential competencies to help couples to take informed decision. Objective: This integrative literature review aimed to explore nurse midwives' knowledge and role in prenatal screening and genetic counselling competency and the challenges faced by them to cater to all pregnant women to empower their autonomy in decision making and ensuring psychological comfort. Method: An electronic search using keywords prenatal screening, genetic counselling, prenatal counselling, nurse midwife, nursing education, genetics, and genomics were done in the PUBMED, SCOPUS and Medline, Google Scholar. Finally, based on inclusion criteria, 8 relevant articles were included. Results: The main review results suggest that nurses and midwives lack essential support, knowledge, or confidence to be able to provide genetic counselling and help the couples ethically to ensure client autonomy and decision making. The majority of nurses and midwives reported inadequate levels of knowledge on genetic screening and their roles in obtaining family history, pedigrees, and providing genetic information for an affected client or high-risk families. The deficiency of well-recognized and influential clinical academic midwives in midwifery practice is also reported. Evidence recommended to update and provide sound educational training to improve nurse-midwife competence and confidence. Conclusion: Overcoming the challenges to achieving informed choices about fetal anomaly screening globally is a major concern. Lack of adequate knowledge and counselling competency, communication insufficiency, need for education and policy are major areas to address. Prenatal nurses' and midwives' knowledge on prenatal genetic screening and essential counselling competencies can ensure services to the majority of pregnant women around the globe to be better-informed decision-makers and enhances their autonomy, and reduces ethical dilemmas.

Keywords : challenges, genetic counselling, prenatal screening, prenatal counselling

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