

Nurses' Knowledge and Practice in the Management of Childhood Malnutrition in Selected Health Centers in Rwanda

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Abstract : Background: Malnutrition contributes significantly to childhood morbidity and mortality. Nurses usually exhibit inadequate knowledge of childhood malnutrition management. Nurses require appropriate knowledge and skills to manage malnutrition using appropriate protocols. Objectives: The general objective of this study was to assess Nurses' knowledge and practice in the management of childhood malnutrition in selected health centers in Rwanda. The specific objectives were to assess the level of nurses' knowledge in the management of childhood malnutrition, to determine the level of practice in the management of childhood malnutrition in selected health centers in Rwanda, and to establish the relationship between the demographic profile and nurses' knowledge in the management of childhood malnutrition in selected health centers in Rwanda. Methods: The study used a descriptive cross-sectional study design and quantitative approach among 196 nurses from 24 health centers in one district. A questionnaire was used to collect data on knowledge and practice towards childhood malnutrition management. The entire population was used, and SPSS version 25 helped to analyze data. Descriptive statistics helped to produce the frequencies and percentages, while chi-square helped to determine the relationship between demographic variables and knowledge and practice scores. Results: The study findings showed that of 196 participants, 48% had a high level of knowledge about malnutrition management with more than 75% score, and 17% and 35% had low and moderate levels of knowledge, respectively. 61% of them had a high level of practice in malnutrition management, as the acceptable score was 75%. 13% had a low level, while 26% had a moderate level of practice. Most socio-demographic characteristics have shown a statistical relationship with the level of knowledge. Conclusion: The study findings revealed that almost half of the nurses had good knowledge of childhood malnutrition management, and this was associated with many socio-demographic data, while more than half had good practice in that aspect. However, some nurses who still have gaps in knowledge and practice require necessary measures to boost these components.

Keywords : nurse, knowledge, practice, childhood malnutrition

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