Assessment of knowledge and attitudes towards health research among nurses working in public health facilities in Botswana

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Background: Nurses as professionals and front-liners in patient care should possess good knowledge about health research as it is critical in improving patient outcomes.

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the level of knowledge and attitudes that public health clinic nurses possess regarding health research in Botswana in order to make recommendations to enhance a research culture among nurses.

Design: A quantitative study with a cross sectional study design was used.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study. Data was collected between May and July 2019 using a newly developed questionnaire. Twenty-six clinics in Gaborone were sampled and 168 nurses participated in the survey. A 47-item questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge and attitudes and to obtain demographic characteristics of nurses. Data was analysed using Stata version 15.1.

Results: Among nurses who completed the anonymous questionnaire, 51% demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of health research. Despite this limited knowledge, nurses had a good attitude towards health research (66%). Degree nurses were more likely to have satisfactory knowledge as were those who reported research training and experience. Additionally, research training and experience were associated with a good attitude.

Conclusion: The findings suggest that nurses have limited knowledge on health research though they portrayed positive attitude. Because of the design of the study, further qualitative research is recommended to establish the views and opinions of nurses and what solutions they think can improve their knowledge on health research.