

Original Research Article

A Study to Assess the Knowledge about Hazards of Ragging among Undergraduate Nursing Students in a Selected College at Mangaluru

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The incidence of Ragging has been increasing among the students over years, despite legislation, execution and strong judicial support given to anti ragging act. Ragging, being a type of abuse of newcomers in educational institutions, where some senior students force the newcomers to go through different verbal, mental, physical, sexual, other, and or combination of tortures, is becoming rampant in colleges and it is about time that the student community awakens its conscience to this inhuman practice. Therefore, the knowledge of students is an indispensable ingredient in identifying and preventing ragging along with the other hazards it is potential enough to cause.

Objectives: The study was conducted to assess the knowledge about hazards of ragging and to determine its with the selected baseline data. **Methods:** A descriptive study approach has been used on a sample of 100 undergraduate nursing students, who were selected by Stratified random sampling by lottery method, in a selected college, in Mangaluru after obtaining institutional ethical clearance. The tools consist of demographic profile along with checklist. Reliability and validity of the tool were established. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statics.

Results: The knowledge assessed by using checklist revealed that 69% of students have good knowledge about hazards of ragging, 30% have average knowledge and 1% having poor knowledge. There is no significant association between knowledge score and selected demographic variables.

Key words: Ragging, hazards, knowledge

INTRODUCTION

People often say that college days are the best time of your life. But along with all these colorful hopes and expectations, there are lists of things which these students hope and pray that they should not encounter during their fresher period and ragging takes the first place in this list. Ragging was considered as welcoming fresher's but behind the word of welcoming there exists notorious activities which will target the victims and makes them to satisfy their own sadistic pleasures. ^[1]

The earliest traces of ragging are noted at Greek Olympics in the 8th century. But later it was adopted as initiation methods among military groups. Decades

after this, in 18th Century it was adopted by student organisations in US/Europe and soon attained racial overtones. In certain European Universities where seniors played practical jokes at the time of welcoming freshmen to the institutions. Gradually, the practice of ragging became popular throughout the world. During the British Raj in India, Army and English schools have witnessed several ragging episodes; many of them are unknown to the world outside. ^[2]

The Honorable Supreme Court of India has given a more comprehensive meaning as "Ragging is any disorderly conduct, whether by words spoken or written, or by an act which has the effect of teasing, treating or handling with rudeness

any student, indulging in rowdy or in disciplined activities which cause or are likely to cause annoyance, hardship or psychological harm or to raise fear or apprehension thereof in a fresher or a junior student and which has the effect of causing or generating a sense of shame or embarrassment so as to adversely affect the psyche of a fresher or a junior student. [1]

Today, ragging has become deep rooted in the Indian educational set up, but many would be surprised to know that ragging is originally a western concept. [1] But sadly, India, which inherited ragging as a legacy from the British Raj, has not been able to free itself from the clutches of this inhuman practice. It can be said, without any room for doubt, that the worst form of ragging is committed in India. [2] In fact, according to a research conducted by CURE (Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education), India and Sri Lanka are the only two countries in the world where ragging exists. [1] Ragging is a type of abuse done by the senior students to the freshers who enter the educational institutions. It could be verbal, mental, sexual or a combination of all. [3]

Ragging is a very disturbing factor in the higher education system of India. It has taken hundreds of lives of the innocents and destroyed the careers of thousands of bright students. The highest number of ragging cases were found in Punjab (35) and lowest in Karnataka (6) and West Bengal (6) as per the English media report between 2007-2013. [5]

The ill effects of ragging include all the dimensions - right from the physical injury through beating, hitting by objects or by forcing to perform dangerous tasks to sexual abuse by forced stripping, forced masturbation, forced unnatural sex, etc. The psychological effects include constant fear, loss of concentration, inferiority complex and guilt because of decline in academic performance and feeling of insecurity arising out of financial exploitation. [6]

Ragging is a problem of the students and by the students; and therefore, the

solution to it also lies with the students. [1] Medical colleges are said to be the most notorious when it comes to the cases of ragging, according to representatives of the National Anti-Ragging helpline. [4]

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive study was conducted in a selected nursing college in Mangaluru. Eligibility criteria for inclusion were, undergraduate nursing students studying in II, III and IV year of course of a selected Nursing College inclusive of both genders. The total population was 300 and 100 subjects were selected from each year by lottery method. Data was collected from the subjects by administering a baseline proforma and a checklist on hazards of ragging.

Content validity of the first tool prepared based on the review of literature and discussion with guides had comprised of two parts - Baseline proforma with six items and a checklist with 34 items, was assessed by submitting them to 7 experts. The suggestions and modification needed on some of the areas as per the experts were done in the tool by deleting few questions, adding few ones and reframing few questions. The final tool had 6 baseline proforma questions, which was left unaltered as the first tool as there were no opinions to change it from the valuers. The second part of the tool, i.e. the yes or no checklist had 20 questions to assess the knowledge about hazards of ragging which was resubmitted to 2 new experts for validation. The experts had 100% agreement towards all the questions in both the sections.

Each question carried one mark for the correct response and zero for the incorrect one. Maximum score was 20 and minimum was zero. The items in the checklist were divided into four main content areas namely, hazards on individual (85%), family (5%), institution (5%) and society (5%).

A formal written permission was obtained from the Principal of selected

College of Nursing, Mangaluru. Data was collected from 25/02/2017 to 04/03/2017. Prior to the data collection investigators became familiar with the samples and explained to them the purpose of the study. We requested the participants, their full cooperation and assured them confidentiality of their response. An informed consent was obtained from the subjects, and checklist was distributed, a time period of 15-20 minutes was given for filling up. Subjects were very cooperative. The investigators were satisfied and happy as they were cooperative, interactive and appreciative through the study. After 20 minutes the tool was collected back.

RESULTS

The collected data was coded and entered in a master data sheet and SPSS (version 20) was used to analyze the collected data. Frequencies and percentages of baseline variables were analyzed. Chi-Square test was used to find the association. The results from the study were organized as follows:

Section 1: Baseline proforma

Baseline proforma includes variables such as age, gender, year of course, awareness about ragging, source of information and participation in any anti ragging program. (Presented in table 1)

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Subjects According to Their Baseline Variables n=100

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage(%) |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Age | | |
| 19 years | 26 | 26 |
| 20 years | 34 | 34 |
| 21 years | 26 | 26 |
| 22 years | 12 | 12 |
| 23 years | 1 | 1 |
| 26 years | 1 | 1 |
| Gender | | |
| Males | 0 | 0 |
| Females | 100 | 100 |
| Year of course | | |
| IInd year | 33 | 33 |
| IIIrd year | 33 | 33 |
| IVth year | 34 | 34 |
| Awareness about ragging | | |
| Yes | 94 | 94 |
| No | 6 | 6 |
| Source of information | | |
| Radio | 9 | 9 |
| Television | 67 | 67 |
| Internet | 42 | 42 |
| Family | 18 | 18 |
| Friends | 58 | 58 |
| Newspaper | 62 | 62 |
| Participation in anti-ragging program | | |
| Yes | 97 | 97 |
| No | 3 | 3 |

Table 1 reveals that majority of the students who were selected for the study belonged to age group of 20 years at 34% and all of the undergraduate nursing students (100%) who participated in the study were females. Moreover, highest rates of 34% were from IVth year of college. Majority of students (94%) were aware of ragging and 97% of the students attended anti ragging programme.

Section 2: Distribution of subjects according to knowledge level

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of undergraduate nursing students based on their knowledge score n= 100

| Knowledge score | Grading | Range of percentage (%) | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 0-8 | Poor knowledge | 0-40 | 1 | 1 |
| 9-16 | Average knowledge | 41-80 | 30 | 30 |
| 17-20 | Good knowledge | 81-100 | 69 | 69 |

Maximum Score =20

From table 2, it is clear that majority of the population (69%) , has good knowledge about hazards of ragging, 30% samples have average knowledge and a single percentage had poor knowledge on the topic.

Table 3 Overall Mean, Mean Percentage and Standard Deviation of subjects on knowledge about hazards of ragging. N=100

| variable | Maximum score | Mean ± Standard deviation | Mean % |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Knowledge score | 20 | 17.17 ± 2.482 | 85.85% |

Table 3 reveals that overall mean percentage of Knowledge about hazards of ragging among undergraduate nursing students is 85.85%, with mean 17.17, which reveals that majority subjects had good knowledge on hazards of ragging.

Table 4 Area wise frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to the grading of knowledge score. n=100

| Area | Maximum possible score of one sample per area | Mean knowledge score attained by population | Percentage of knowledge score(%) |
|-------------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| Individual | 17 | 13.50 | 79.47 |
| Family | 1 | 00.87 | 87 |
| Society | 1 | 00.54 | 54 |
| Institution | 1 | 00.91 | 91 |

Table 4 shows that, 79.47% of students are aware of hazards of ragging on individual whereas, 87% of the samples are aware about the hazards of ragging that affect the family of the victim and 91% of the samples are enlightened about the hazards of ragging on the institution. A huge percentage (46%) is unaware of the hazards of ragging on the society.

Table 5 Association of Knowledge Score and Selected Baseline Variables

| Sl. No | Variable | Hazards | | χ^2 value | P value |
|--------|-------------------------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|
| | | ≤median | >median | | |
| 1. | Age(in years) | | | 8.22 | 0.145 |
| | 19 | 12 | 14 | | |
| | 20 | 16 | 18 | | |
| | 21 | 11 | 15 | | |
| | 22 | 10 | 2 | | |
| | 23 | 1 | 0 | | |
| 2. | Year of course | | | 2.574 | 0.276 |
| | II nd year | 17 | 16 | | |
| | III rd year | 20 | 14 | | |
| | IV th year | 13 | 20 | | |
| 3. | Awareness about ragging | | | 0.709 | 0.400 |
| | No | 4 | 2 | | |
| | Yes | 46 | 48 | | |

The findings in table 5 show that is no significant association between knowledge about the hazards of ragging among undergraduate nursing students and selected demographic variables. Hence null hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

Majority of the students who were selected for the study (34%) belonged to age group of 20 years and all of them were females. A large percentage (94%) of students were aware of ragging, majority of them came to know about the same through television (67%), friends (58%), Newspaper (62%) and through other sources of information (96%). The study also revealed that only 97% of students have attended any anti-ragging program organized by their college.

Comparing the findings of the present study conducted among the undergraduate nursing students, it showed that 69% of the subjects had good knowledge whereas 30% had average knowledge regarding the hazards of ragging.

Chi-square test was used to identify the association of knowledge on hazards of ragging and its selected baseline variables. However the present study revealed no association with selected variables.

A quantitative study published in the CURE (coalition to uproot ragging from education) report 2007 under the title – “Ragging in India - A summary report on incidents, social perceptions and psychological perspectives.” In this study they found 64 ragging cases reported from 2005 to present with no replications, of which 61 were in colleges and 3 were reportedly from schools. Out of 61 the kickoff ragging only for 41 cases, physical ragging 26 (62%), physical and sexual ragging 5 (13%), sexual ragging 8 (18%), verbal ragging 2 (7%) and not known cases are 20. It is given that the verbal ragging cases are milder than physical or sexual ragging cases. [6]

Ragging is a very common problem in colleges. The present study helped the researchers to identify the level of knowledge regarding ragging even after the

exposure to training programmes. This could help in creating an insight on one's own knowledge level as well as develops curiosity in students, which indirectly increase their awareness. The assessed knowledge helps the institution and management to identify the students' awareness and assertiveness towards ragging. Fortunately, a result of majority samples with good knowledge about hazards of ragging gives a positive sign of reduced prevalence of ragging in institutions.

Article published in The Hindu newspaper suggests some of the steps could be taken to prevent ragging are: The head of the institution should address the student body personally regarding the ill effects of ragging, the laws on anti ragging etc., Banning of alcohol and smoking and a very strict action should be taken against this. The dress code which has to be followed in college has to be notified through written letter and should be displayed throughout the academic year on the notice board. Surprise checking can be conducted by authorities to hostels especially in the night. Separate hostel provisions could be made available to improve confidence among the newcomers. [4] The Medical Council of India and University Grant commission (UGC) must also act against the colleges and universities. [7]

The nursing education is designed to prepare individual for the nurse educator role in academics and also in developmental field. Today, ragging has become deep rooted in the Indian educational set up. It is essential that the students should be aware regarding hazards of ragging, as it is prevalent even in certain nursing colleges, in various forms. It may vary from asking questions to the juniors or making them do senior's assignment. Hence it is very important to be aware of ragging to identify its incidence and prevalence, and also elimination of the same. The awareness can be provided by means of anti-ragging programs, posters, counseling etc.

CONCLUSION

The present study could identify that the student nurses had good knowledge about hazards of ragging. The study was limited to assessment of their knowledge. There are very limited studies done in this area, hence, more studies need to be conducted to assess their level of awareness regarding this same issue, so that, proper intervention can be implemented.

Limitations of the study

1. This study is limited to a small population
2. This study is limited in undergraduate nursing students who is meeting the criteria only
3. All the subjects were females
4. Subjects already had an exposure to antiragging training session
5. The freshers were not included in the study was the major limitation

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