

Current Status of Knowledge and Awareness of Doctors Regarding Medicolegal Work

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Abstract

Objective: To get information about knowledge of doctors in the field of forensic medicine.

Method: It was a cross sectional study. Convenience sampling technique was adopted. Study duration was 2 months and 10 days i.e., 6th May to 16th July 2023. Sample size was 200. Study centre was Sialkot medical college, Sialkot. A questionnaire containing 18 questions from different parts of forensic medicine was distributed to 200 doctors through e mail. Data was analysed by using SPSS version 25. It was presented in table form.

Results: All doctors replied. Knowledge related to medical ethics was 100%. Law related issues had least knowledge. Eagerness to go in this field was only 22%.

Conclusion: Most of the doctors are reluctant to choose forensic medicine as their future field. Overall knowledge was not good enough. It needs to be motivated and induce eagerness in this field by explaining the importance of this subject to the students and graduates of medicine.

Keywords: Medical ethics, consent, Isqat i hammal, Isqat i janien, Postmortem Lividity.

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Introduction

Doctor has long been deemed as very respectful and trusted person in the whole glob. Patient due to trust in doctor usually opens up secrets. Doctor under professional secrecy never discloses that information other than under privileged communication. During recent times the luxury of respect enjoyed by previous doctors is no more available to new ones.¹ Forensic or legal medicine is a branch of medicine in which scientific knowledge and skill is used to further justice and apply law. Medical jurisprudence is another branch which describes the interrelationship between doctor, community, state and patient. It deals with medical negligence cases.² Now a days cases of negligence against doctors

has been increased. This has made the medical doctors prone to more anxious and depressed life.³ As attitude of the patients towards doctor is changing, which has increased the need of laws for the protection of rights of patients and doctors. The opposing behaviour of various kinds of media has put oil on fire against doctors.⁴ Doctors in government job usually perform medicolegal work. They present in the court of law for evidence in various cases. Many times the court passes negative remarks against doctors due to lack of forensic medicine knowledge.⁵ It is an essential aspect of young doctor to have basic forensic medicine knowledge so that he could perform law related work without any difficulty and error. So that he could help the state in furthering justice.⁶ Any case in which court wants to explore the truth about inflicted wound to hold responsible the person committing it under rules and regulations of the country is called a medicolegal case.⁷ It includes different types of hurt, their manner of infliction. Reports about poisoning cases and transportation injuries.^{8,9,10} Any wound may have to be described with respect to its nature, site, duration and direction.¹¹ In documentation it has to written that either a blunt weapon has been used

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or some sharp edge weapon has been used.¹²

Material and Method

It was a cross sectional study. Study centre was Sialkot medical college, Sialkot. Convenience sampling technique was adopted to collect the data. Any doctors who showed willingness to take part in the study was selected regardless of age, sex, experience and job place. Sample size was 200 doctors. Study duration was 2 months and 10 days. A questionnaire was prepared including 18 basic questions from forensic medicine and toxicology. The questionnaire was presented on 6th May 2023 through e mail. All responses were recollected till 16th of July 2023. A prior informed consent was taken from every participant. Questionnaire was prepared on google forms. Statistical analysis was carried out by using SPSS version 25. Percentages were calculated. Responses were presented in the form of table.

Results

200 doctors were sent the forms. All responded. A question regarding medical negligence was put. 75% of the doctors replied correctly. Response to question from identification was only 10% right in answer. 90% response to question from thanatology was right. 75% knew the definition of Algor mortis. Regarding institute for performing autopsy was 87% right. Regarding response to questions from Qisas and Diyat act was 54% right about Qatal i khata, 54% knew about jhur, 83% knew rightly about itlafa udw and 91% knew about isqat i hamal. 82% knew the definition of isqat i jenin. 70% knew the difference between fimbriated and torn hymen. Question from toxicology was responded rightly 73%. 56% knew about best sample for detection of heroin. Only 56% doctors showed willingness to work in forensic medicine department. Only 61% doctors knew the exact location of Punjab Forensic Lab. 74% gave the right definition of shajjah i munaqqila.

Discussion

The scope, roles, and tasks of forensic medicine and forensic medical experts currently vary widely between countries and legal systems, which has resulted in barriers to organization, standard setting, and quality assurance for practice in forensic medicine, including for reporting.¹³ Forensic has been derived from forensic meaning presenting in front of public in order to find solutions of discrepancies. Many branches of medicine are interlinked with law under forensic medicine.¹⁴ In

Table 1: Response to different questions.

	Right response	Don't know	Wrong response
Consent is necessary before IUCD	200	-	-
Do you know the term "RES IPSA LEQUITUR"	74%	26%	-
Ossification centre of lower end of femur and upper end of tibia occurs in	30%	-	70%
Do you know the putrefaction and marbling of skin	90%	10%	-
Do you know the difference between post-mortem staining and PM lividity	20%	43%	37%
Autopsy is performed in which institution	87%	-	13%
Section 319 PPC is related to	54%	31%	15%
JURH is under which section	56%	-	44%
Antidote for oxalic acid is	73%	-	27%
Following is the best sample for heroin detection	55%	-	45%
Do you like to work in forensic department at government sector	22%	22%	56%
Forensic science lab is located in	61%	-	39%
Do you know what is Itlaf i udw?	83%	-	17%
Do you know what is meant by the term "Isqat i Hamal"	91%	-	9%
What is meant by Algor Mortis	75%	5%	20%
Do you know what is meant by the term Isqat i Janin?	82%	-	18%
Do you know the difference fimbriated and torn hymen	70%	-	30%
Bone of skull is fractured and dislocated without touching membranes. It comes under	74%	-	26%

current study, Only 22% of all samples showed eagerness for joining government institute in forensic medicine. The knowledge in personal identity was least. It was only 30%. In medical ethics they had reasonable knowledge. Law related knowledge was around 55%. It is in accordance with another study carried out in India where only 14.5% showed willingness for forensic medicine in their future.¹⁵ In another study carried out in Sargodha, only 21% of samples showed willingness for forensic medicine.¹⁶ A survey was carried out in America, in which there was a huge percentage of unwillingness towards law related medicine.¹⁷ A study performed in India, on postgraduate trainees concluded that basic knowledge about forensic medicine was much low.¹⁸ Regarding autopsy conduction 87% participants knew about the institutes for conduction of autopsy. Lack of willingness for autopsy work was 81.3% in a study in India.¹⁹ Likewise, Gebremariam and Hagos

said that health workers were deficient regarding law related knowledge.²⁰ In India Maharashtra, a study concluded that most of the residents were ignorant of medicolegal issues.²¹ Over all in the whole world the importance and need of forensic medicine in sex related issues and in many other crimes has been emphasised and also enhancement of its knowledge.^{22,23}

Conclusion

Overall knowledge in forensic medicine was not good. It needs to develop eagerness in this field. As it is essential part of our court system.

Conflict of Interest *None*

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Authors Contribution

USB: Conceptualization of Project

MA, RM: Data Collection

ZA, HI: Literature Search

MA: Statistical Analysis

USB, SR: Drafting, Revision