

Assessment of knowledge, attitude and practice towards scabies among medical students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2018

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Abstract

Background: The adequate knowledge about scabies and its preventive measures are important for diagnosis and managing scabies.

Objectives: Evaluating the knowledge, attitude and practice of scabies among medical students in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Methods: A cross sectional study that was conducted at KSA, for 4 months from May to August 2018. The study included 445 medical Saudi students from both genders. A self-administrated questionnaire was distributed among all the participants.

Results: The study included 445 medical students from different parts of KSA in which the level of knowledge among them regarding scabies and its preventive measures was adequate among most of the participants regarding the causative agents, features of scabies, its associated spreading factors and diagnosis. The attitude and practice of most of the subjects were positive.

Conclusion: This study showed a satisfactory level of knowledge, attitude and practice among medical students in KSA regarding scabies, clinical characteristics and its preventive measures.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Practice, scabies, medical students, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Introduction:

Scabies is a skin infestation caused by parasitic mite which is associated with itching, lesions and rashes ⁽¹⁾. It is not a life threatening disease but its incidence is high reaching about 300 million around the worldwide⁽²⁾. Its infestation and outbreaks cause high burden on the authority health costs which is hard to be controlled and treated ^(3,4).

Scabies can affect both genders and all ages from children to adults as well. It is associated with poor health conditions as poverty, overcrowding and poor hygiene ^(5,6).

It can be transmitted by person to person by direct contact and its classic symptoms are pruritus which become worth during night, hypersensitivity and other complications including impetigo, septicemia, abscesses, folliculitis, cellulitis, and may result in death^(7,8).

The scabies can be misdiagnosed as it can mimic other skin diseases thus, skin scraping is the best diagnostic method ⁽⁹⁾. The adequate knowledge about scabies and its preventive measures are important for managing scabies. Thus, this study aimed at evaluating the knowledge, attitude and practice of scabies among medical students in KSA.

Methods:

Study design:

This was a cross sectional study that was conducted at KSA, for 4 months from May to August 2018.

Study population and sample size:

The sample size was randomly selected from 13 random Universities from which 35 medical students were randomly chosen from the 6th class. The study included 445 medical Saudi students from both genders.

Study

tools:

A self-administrated questionnaire was conducted, reviewed and developed to assess the medical students' knowledge attitude and practice pattern.

Ethical approval:

The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of Faculty of medicine. The participants provided a written informed consent of their approval.

Statistical analysis:

The data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 22) for windows. The variables were presented as frequencies and percentages.

Results:

Assessment of knowledge:

The study included 445 medical students from different parts of KSA in which the level of knowledge among them regarding scabies and its preventive measures was adequate among most of the participants regarding the causative agents, features of scabies and its associated spreading factors. Also, most of the participants knew that scabies can be diagnosed by skin scraping but can't be diagnosed neither by blood culture nor stool analysis.

Table (1): Awareness level among medical students (445):

	Correct
1- Causative organism of scabies.	311 (70%)
2- Common feature of scabies	349 (78.4%)
3- Factors aiding spread of scabies	400 (90%)
4- Features of complicated scabies	298 (67%)
5- Scabies was diagnosed by clinical signs and symptoms (true)	440 (99%)
6- Scabies was diagnosed by microscopy of skin scrapings(true)	445(100%)
7- Scabies was diagnosed by blood culture (false)	345 (77.5%)
8- Scabies was diagnosed by stool analysis (false)	445(100%)
9- High index of suspicion was required for clinical diagnosis(true)	391 (87.9%)

Level of knowledge:

The level of knowledge was adequate among the majority of medical students (Table. 2).

Table (2): Level of knowledge regarding scabies:

Knowledge level	Frequency	Percent (%)
Good	382	85.8
Poor	63	14.2
Total	445	100.0

- Evaluation of the attitude towards scabies prevention:

The attitude of most of the subjects was positive as presented in Table. (3).

Table (3): Attitude of medical students toward scabies

	No.	Percentage (%)
Mattresses and pillows are dried every week		
Yes	445	100
No	0	0
Scabies sufferers have to be isolated		
Yes	445	100
No	0	0
Scabies patients do need to be avoided		
Yes	445	100
No	0	0

Practice pattern of included subjects:

The level of practice was sufficient among most of medical students regarding the preventive measure of scabies.

Table (4): practice pattern among medical students:

	Yes	No
1. Assign patient to a private room.	445 (100%)	0 (0%)
2. Restrict visitors until treatment regimen completed.	398 (89.4%)	47 (10.6%)
3. Scabies can be prevented by maintaining a good personal hygiene.	445 (100%)	0 (0%)
4. If there are cases of scabies, treatment should be done quickly to prevent the transmission of disease.	445 (100%)	0 (0%)

Discussion

This is the first descriptive study which was conducted in KSA to study the KAP of medical students toward scabies and its preventive measures. The study showed a satisfactory level of knowledge about scabies causative agents, risk factors, features, diagnosis and prevention. In the same respect, a study was conducted among nurses in Gazan. The level of KAP was adequate among most of the participants ⁽¹⁰⁾. Also, another study on the knowledge and management of scabies in general practitioners and dermatologists showed a good level of knowledge among most of the participants ⁽¹¹⁾.

In accordance, another similar study carried out in Western Europe showed that general practitioners and dermatologists have acceptable knowledge regarding scabies with a high scores among dermatologists ⁽¹²⁾.

These results are in contrast to those of a study conducted in Nigeria among 500 medical students in which the level of knowledge was unsatisfactory among most of the subjects though the diseases is endemic ⁽¹³⁾.

Also, a Pakistani study presented a general lack of knowledge about scabies among general practitioners which resulted in a high prevalence of scabies in their community⁽¹⁴⁾.

The level of attitude and practice were adequate among most of subjects which could be attributed to the sufficient level of knowledge among them.

One limitation of this study is the scanty or rare data about this scabies among the medical students in KSA.

Conclusion:

This study showed a satisfactory level of knowledge, attitude and practice among the medical students in KSA regarding scabies, clinical characteristics and its preventive measures.

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