Sunil MB
M.Sc (N), Associate Professor,
Department of Community
Health Nursing, KLES
Institute of Nursing Sciences,
Hubballi, Karnataka, India

Manjunath GS
M.Sc (N), Associate Professor,
Department of Medical
Surgical Nursing, KLES
Institute of Nursing Sciences,
Hubballi, Karnataka, India

Vani K
M.Sc (N), Associate Professor,
Department of Community
Health Nursing, KLES
Institute of Nursing Sciences,
Hubballi, Karnataka, India

A descriptive study to assess the knowledge regarding Ganser syndrome among law students of selected college, Hubballi

Sunil MB, Manjunath GS and Vani K

Abstract

Background of the study: A person is said to be healthy not only because of his physical health but also because of his mental well-being. It is very important to have knowledge to identify some peculiar psychiatric disorders like ganser syndrome.

Objectives: To assess the knowledge regarding Ganser syndrome and to find out an association between pre-test knowledge scores with their selected socio demographic variables.

Methodology: A Descriptive study was conducted among 40 law students of selected Law college of Hubballi. The research design used for the study was Descriptive research design.

Results: Overall result of the study revealed that 35(87.5%) had average knowledge, 03(7.5%) had good knowledge and 02(05%) had poor knowledge regarding ganser syndrome.

Conclusion: The study concluded that, overall knowledge of law students regarding ganser syndrome is average. Hence, the law students should be encouraged to attend awareness programmes. It is very important for law students to have knowledge to identify some peculiar psychiatric disorders like ganser syndrome.

Keywords: Ganser syndrome, knowledge, laws students, awareness programme

Introduction

Mental illness is maladjustment in living. It produces disharmony in the person's ability to meet human needs comfortably or effectively and function within a culture [1]. Dissociative disorders are defined by a disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception. Ganser syndrome is one such dissociative disorders [2].

Ganser syndrome was first described in 1897 by Sigbert Ganser in 4 prisoners. Initially, it was believed to be rare, occurring mainly in forensic settings. Later, such cases were reported more frequently in non-forensic settings. The syndrome has found a place in both the ICD-10 and DSM-IV [3]. In the patients with Ganser's syndrome, their central diagnostic feature is indeed a tendency to reliably provide wrong and approximate responses, especially to the most trivial and innocent questions. On the surface, this looks simple enough, yet, 120 years after it was first described this rare and controversial condition still raises profound and unresolved issues [4].

Ganser syndrome is a type of factitious disorder, a mental illness in which a person deliberately and consciously acts as if he or she has a physical or mental illness when he or she is not really sick [5]. The syndrome tends to be more common in men (75%), with a male to female ratio of 4:1. It has been most frequently seen in individuals ages 15 to 40. Ganser syndrome has also been observed in groups other than prison populations [6].

Ganser syndrome is also referred to as "prison psychosis," because it was first observed in prisoners and it is emphasizing its prevalence among prisoners but this syndrome can also occur in apparently healthy individuals who have been facing a stressor of some description. It is characterized by nonsensical or wrong answers to questions and other dissociative symptoms such as fugue, amnesia or conversion disorder, often with visual pseudo hallucinations and a decreased state of consciousness [7].

Law students learn about corrections and security as well as the role of criminal justice in the judicial system. They also study security and loss prevention.

Corresponding Author:
Sunil MB
M.Sc (N), Associate Professor,
Department of Community
Health Nursing, KLES
Institute of Nursing Sciences,
Hubballi, Karnataka, India

As the Ganser syndrome is seen in the prisoners and the lawyers deal with them, knowledge regarding Ganser syndrome would be of helpful to them [8].

A case study was conducted on 34 years old farmer in United States. On mental status examination (MSE), the patient was anxious and sometimes laughed at the examiner's questions. He was intermittently disoriented to time, person and the place, but the answers he gave to the questions were often approximations to the truth. The results showed that ganser syndrome has temporary clouding of consciousness. The study concluded that ganser syndrome represents a specific and recognizable clinical entity and that it reflects a hysteric phenomenon [9].

Today, Ganser syndrome is debated by both psychiatric and judicial systems. Ganser syndrome is considered as a hysterical reaction, was often used to describe prisoners who appeared to be trying to escape prosecution. Knowledge regarding Ganser syndrome is of most important for the Law students for their future endurement [10]. Hence there is a need to educate the law students regarding the Ganser syndrome, its symptoms, diagnosis and treatment. This will help them to identify the cases of Ganser syndrome among the prisoners while dealing with the cases in their future law practice.

Material and Methods
Research approach: Descriptive Research Approach.
Research design: Descriptive Survey design.
Research setting: KLES G. K. Law College Hubballi.

Population
Target Population : Law students
Accessible Population: 40 Final year law students studying in KLES' G. K. Law College, Hubballi.

Sample and sampling technique
Sample : Final year law students studying in KLES' G. K. Law College, Hubballi.
Sampling technique : Probability; Simple Random sampling technique.
Sample size   :   40

Criteria for selection of the sample
The criteria for sample selection are mainly depicted under two headings, which includes the inclusion and the exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria
- Students who are studying in final year of KLES' G. K. Law College, Hubballi.
- Students who are available at the time of data collection.

Exclusion criteria
- Students who are not willing to participate
- Students who were sick during data collection

Development of the tool
The tool used for research study was structured knowledge questionnaire which was prepared to assess the knowledge regarding ganser syndrome. The tool was formulated on the basis of the experience of the investigator, review of literature and consultation with experts.

Description of the data collection tool
In this study the data collection tools were consisted of 2 parts covering the following areas.
Part: I- Socio demographic of law students included 7 items such as age, gender, religion, type of family, area of residence, study of ganser syndrome in curriculum and source of information about ganser syndrome.
Part: II - Structured knowledge questionnaire on ganser syndrome.

Results
Findings related to socio-demographic variables of subjects
Majority of the subjects 80% belongs to the age group of 21-30 years, 17.50% belongs the age group of 31-40 years and 2.50% belongs to the age group of 41-50 years. Maximum number of subjects 65% were males and 35 were females. With regards to area of residence, 52.50% were from rural area while 47.50% were from urban area. Regarding study of ganser syndrome as a part of their curriculum, all the subjects have not studied ganser syndrome as a part of their curriculum. Maximum subjects 90% had no information about ganser syndrome, while 10% had the source of information as electronic media.
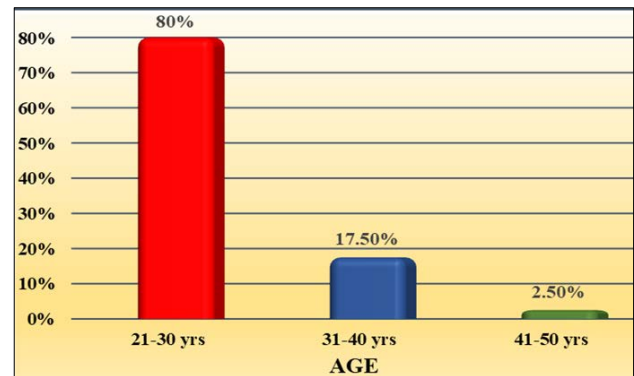

Fig 1: The column diagram represents percentage distribution of subjects according to age.

Analysis and interpretation of knowledge scores of subjects who have participated in the study regarding ganser syndrome

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Range of knowledge scores of subjects regarding ganser syndrome.

Mean	Standard deviation	Range
8.7	2.45	13

Table 1 reveals that that the mean knowledge score was 8.7, standard deviation 2.45 and range 13.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge scores of subjects regarding ganser syndrome.

	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Good (above 11)	03	7.5%
Average (06 to 11)	35	87.5%
Poor (below 06)	02	05%

Table 2 shows that distribution of level of knowledge of law students regarding ganser syndrome. Most of the subjects 35 (87.5%) had average knowledge, 03(7.5%) had good knowledge and 02(05%) had poor knowledge regarding ganser syndrome and none had poor knowledge.
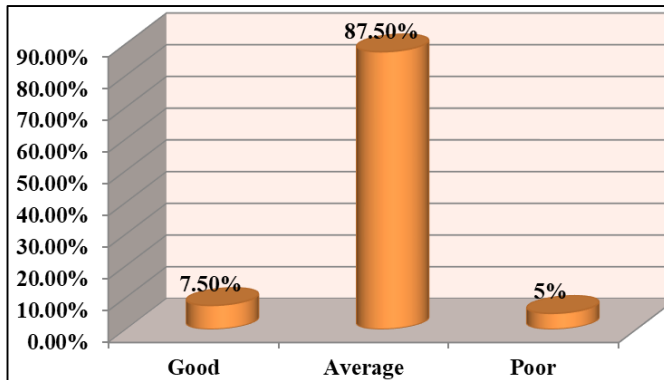
Fig 2: The column diagram represents percentage distribution of subjects according to knowledge scores.

Analysis and interpretation of data to find out an association between pre-test knowledge scores of subjects with their selected socio demographic variables.
Calculated chi-square value for age 20.54 was greater than tabulated value 9.49. Hence, there was an association between pretest knowledge scores of subjects only with their Age. And there is no association between pretest knowledge scores of subjects with their other socio demographic variables like, gender, area of residence, study of ganser syndrome in curriculum and sources of information about ganser syndrome.

Discussion
This study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding Ganser syndrome among law students of selected colleges, Hubballi. There were no literatures found either to support or to contradict the findings related to knowledge regarding ganser syndrome. Ganser syndrome is one of the least researched topics in the field of psychiatry nursing. Only few articles, limited scientific research and theories are available on knowledge regarding Ganser Syndrome.

Conclusion
The findings revealed that, out of forty law students, majority of the subjects 32(80%) belongs to the age group of 21-30 years, maximum number of subjects 26(65%) were males. Nobody among the subjects studied ganser syndrome in their curriculum. Maximum subjects 36 (90%) had no information about the syndrome. With respect to their knowledge most of the subjects 87.5% had average knowledge, 7.5% had good knowledge and 05% had poor knowledge regarding ganser syndrome.
The study concluded that, the overall knowledge scores of law students were average. This indicates, there is a need to conduct awareness programmes to improve the knowledge of law students. Hence, the need of teaching sessions regarding ganser syndrome for law students is highly recommended.

Implications of the study
The investigator has drawn the following implication from the study:
- Psychiatric nurses who practice in both psychiatric and legal systems need an understanding of Ganser syndrome to adequately assess the patient, plan effective treatment and evaluation of care.
- When a psychiatric evaluation is ordered by the court, It is the the responsibility of a psychiatric facility to assess, treat, and evaluate Ganser syndrome. The

patients may return to court following the psychiatric evaluation if they are found competent to stand trial. Hence nurses need to be educated on Ganser syndrome.
- The study helps the nursing manager to initiate and carry out various methods of teaching for nursing students, nurses, law students and lawyers regarding ganser syndrome at various settings.
- Ganser syndrome is one of the least researched in the field of psychiatry nursing.
- More number of researches is needed to be conducted on the nature, symptoms and treatment and prognosis of Ganser syndrome.

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