Nurses' knowledge on the assessment of alcohol consumption and smoking and its effect on blood pressure

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ABSTRACT

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Introduction: Excessive alcohol consumption and smoking increase the risk of hypertension and the incidence of cardiovascular disease. Nurses have a unique opportunity to help patients who smoke and consume alcohol at a risky level, not requiring a specialist, which may contribute to a reduction in blood pressure (BP), as well as providing more health benefits. The aim of the study was to evaluate the knowledge of nurses on how to assess the consumption of alcohol and smoking and their effect on BP.

Material and methods: The study included 1,108 participants (W-1,089, M-19, aged 21-60, 0-37 years of work experience). The study was conducted in 2007-2009 using the diagnostic survey method and achievement tests.

Results: Alcohol assessment methods were correctly indicated by 13.4% of respondents, while the correct interpretation of a standard unit of alcohol was made by 35.8% of respondents. The Fagerström Test was known only to 13.2% of respondents. The effects of alcohol and smoking on BP values were known to most subjects. The youngest participants, nursing graduates, were significantly more likely to have made the correct indication.

Conclusions: Overall, knowledge of how to assess alcohol consumption and smoking allowing minimal intervention to take place in the group of nurses studied was relatively low. Significantly more correct indications were made by the youngest respondents, those who were not married and nursing graduates. It seems reasonable to popularize methods for identifying the risk of hypertension associated with alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking in postgraduate nursing education.

Key words: Smoking, alcohol consumption, arterial hypertension, blood pressure, nurses

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