

How Much the Act of Secrecy is Done by Medical Staff? A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Survey in South of Iran

Hassan Zabetian¹, Mansour Deylami², Amir Hossein Sharifian³ and Safar Zarei⁴

¹Department of Anaesthesiology, Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Iran. ²Department of Anaesthesiology, Golestan University of Medical Sciences, Golestan, Iran. ³Department of Student Research Committee, Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Iran. ⁴Department of Physiology, Jahrom University of Medical Sciences, Jahrom, Iran.

DOI : <http://dx.doi.org/10.13005/bpj/832>

Abstract:

Some information may be gathered during the medical procedures, including medical records or personal information. Many of them can be considered as secrets. The medical staff has the duty of privacy, which means keeping the secrets away from a third party. Hippocratic Oath accepts no exceptions but modern ethical references express the situations in which the disclosure of secrets is allowed, legal, or even necessary. The present study is about to evaluate the act of secrecy in medical staff of the tertiary health care centers affiliated with Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in south of Iran. This cross sectional study is done on 204 members of medical staff of 8 different wards in tertiary health care centers affiliated with Jahrom University of Medical Sciences in south of Iran, using a questionnaire of 31 questions in 5 major categories adding to a data sheet for demographic information (age, gender, ward). Validity and reliability of the questionnaire was proved by previous studies. Collected data analyzed by dependent T-test, Fisher's exact and SPSS.17 using descriptive and deductive statistics. The mean rate of secrecy was 3.82 ± 0.75 . Respecting others in the category of "goals of secrecy" earned 4.48, common medical services in the category of "reasons for disclosure" earned 3.89, damage to the patient in the category of "legal reasons for disclosure" earned 4.05, patient's rights in "personal reasons for secrecy" earned 4.07, and informing the medical managers in "proper way to confront the offenders" with the score 2.85 were the highest scores of each category. The variant Ages ($p=0.003$) and wards ($p=0.03$) showed significant differences in the secrecy. Results show that the medical staff is not familiar enough to the legal and ethical indications of secrecy, so holding in-service courses may be effective.

Keywords:

Medical Staff; Patients; Professional ethics