



# “Perception of male nursing students towards obstetrical and Gynecological nursing clinical practice at selected nursing colleges, Kollam.”

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**Abstract:** A qualitative study was carried out using the in-depth interview method to assess the Perception of male nursing students towards obstetrical and Gynecological nursing clinical practice at selected nursing colleges, Kollam. The objective of the study was to explore the perception of male nursing students towards obstetrical and gynecological nursing clinical practice at selected nursing colleges, Kollam. The research design selected for the study was descriptive qualitative research design. The setting of the study was Bishop Benziger College of Nursing, Upasana College of Nursing and VNSS College of Nursing, Kollam. The population included BSc. Nursing Final year male students studying in Bishop Benziger College of Nursing, Upasana College of Nursing and VNSS College of Nursing, Kollam. The study sample consisted of 10 samples. Intensity sampling technique was used in this study. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistics for demographic data and Semi structured interview was analyzed by using thematic analysis technique. In the present study, six main themes were identified: Concept regarding obstetrical and gynaecological nursing course, Barriers encountered as a male student nurse, Attitude and Behaviour of people towards male student nurses, Opinion regarding developing their career in OBG clinical department, Views on members in your family being cared by male obstetric nurse and Suggestions regarding changes in curriculum in OBG specialty. Therefore, they stated that they had trouble in performing practices related to this course. The study concluded that, male student nurses felt themselves under pressure in the maternity clinic where the women’s privacy come to the forefront, and had various degrees of difficulty in practicing their theoretical knowledge during the course.

**Index Terms - Perception, Male nursing students, Obstetrical nursing clinical experience.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a profession that helps to protect and improve the health of the individual, family and community regardless of the gender of the person who provides and receives health services, and aims to improve and rehabilitate the health of a person when he/she is sick and to promote the quality of life of its clients in any case. Provision of healthcare, one of the roles of nursing, is identified with the traditional role of women, and thus, nursing has been perceived as a profession for women for many years.

The theoretical section of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing course, given in the final year in the nursing curriculum includes the female reproductive organs, development of pregnancy, the physiology of prenatal, intranatal and postnatal periods, health care and health needs of women in different periods of their lives. The clinical practice of the course includes such topics as birth, the care of puerperal woman, following of abnormal uterine bleeding, perineal hygiene, neonatal care, breastfeeding and breast care (Coskun, 2008). Although both male and female students are expected to achieve the same performance in order to be successful in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing Course, the reality is different.

Because due to the influence of the cultural and religious values, protection of women’s privacy is over-exaggerated, all of the obstetrical and gynecological health services are preferred to be given by female health professionals. This results in a great disappointment in male nurses who prefer nursing schools and faculties for such reasons as job guarantees, social prestige, and career, and causes them to leave the clinic or even the profession, to seek other jobs, to suffer burnout, which in turn leads to an increase in nursing shortage in country and world.

## II. NEED OF THE STUDY.

The problems faced by the male nursing students in the clinical area gave intuition to the researchers to conduct study to investigate the challenges experienced by male students studying in selected nursing colleges to get information regarding present generation male nurse’s views and attitude towards the clinical applications of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing course among the male students.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to explore the perception of male nursing students towards Obstetrical Nursing clinical practice at selected nursing colleges, Kollam.

### Objective

The objective of the study was

- To explore the perception of male nursing students towards obstetrical nursing clinical practice at selected nursing colleges, Kollam.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outlines the plan and method that how the study was conducted. This includes Universe of the study, sample of the study, Data and Sources of Data, study's variables and analytical framework. The details are as follows;

### 3.1 Research approach

Qualitative research approach

### 3.2 Research design

The research design selected for the study was descriptive qualitative research design.

### 3.3 Setting of the study

The setting of the study was Bishop Benziger College of Nursing, Upasana College of Nursing and VNSS College of Nursing, Kollam.

### 3.4 Population

The population included BSc. Nursing Final year male students studying in Bishop Benziger College of Nursing, Upasana College of Nursing and VNSS College of Nursing, Kollam.

### 3.5 Sample and sampling technique

The study sample consisted of 10 samples.

#### 3.5.1 Sampling technique

Intensity sampling technique was used to select 10 samples.

### 3.6 Tool/instrument

**Section-A:** Demographic variables such as age, area of residence, education of parents, occupation of parents, type of family, family income, duration of OBG nursing clinical experience

**Section-B:** Semi structured interview schedule to explore the perception of male nursing students towards obstetrical nursing clinical practice.

### 3.7 Data collection procedure

The researchers had obtained the institution ethical clearance from the head of the institutions and written permission was received from the head of the concerned institution. The detailed participant information sheet and consent form was given to the participants and interview was conducted using semi-structured questionnaire. Each participant had taken 10-20 minutes to complete the interview session and audio was recorded. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

The data were compiled for analysis. The analyses of the data were based on the objectives of the study using descriptive statistics. Thematic analysis technique was used to analyze the data. Participant characteristics and questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequency and percentage. The interviews were analyzed to discover themes articulated by the participants. Verbatim transcripts were made of the audiotapes, and the researcher listened to the tapes, studied the transcripts, and made memos about major thematic categories. When continuing data collection and analysis failed to uncover new ideas, it was determined that saturation had occurred and data collection was concluded.

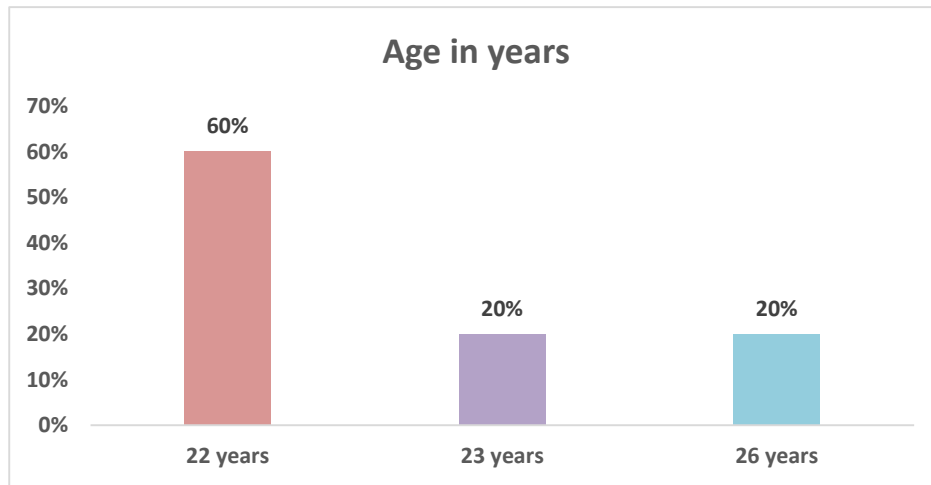
## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Result

#### Section A: Description of sample characteristics.

##### 1. Age in years:

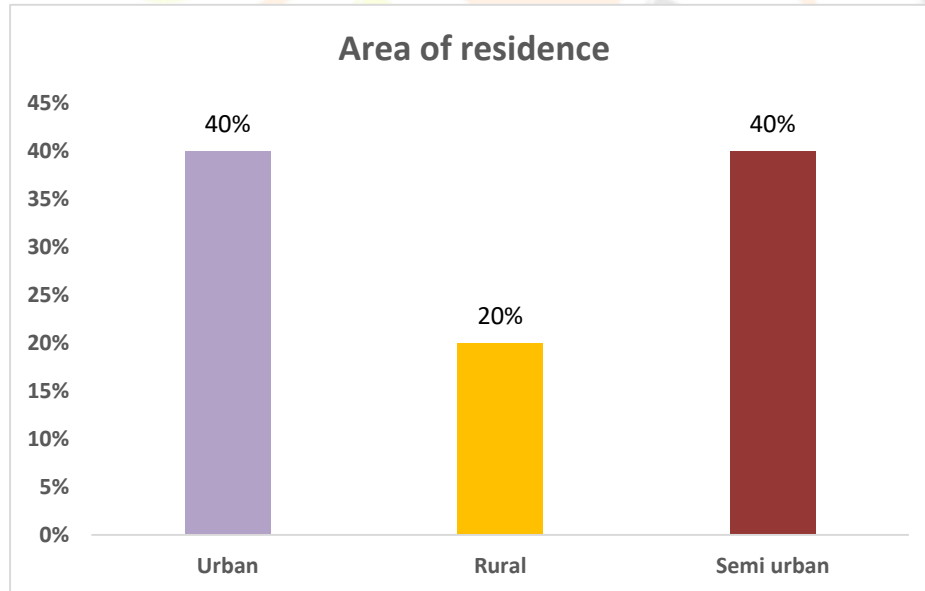
N=10



**Figure 1:** Percentage wise distribution of sample according to age: The data in the figure 1 shows that, 60% of the sample belongs to the age group of 22 years, 20% belongs to the age group of 23 years and 20% belongs to belongs to the age group of 26 years.

##### 2. Area of Residence

N=10



**Figure 2:** Percentage wise distribution of sample according to Area of residence: The data in the figure 2 shows that, 40% of the samples live in urban area and 20% in rural area, and 40% lives in semi urban area.

3. Education of parents

N=10

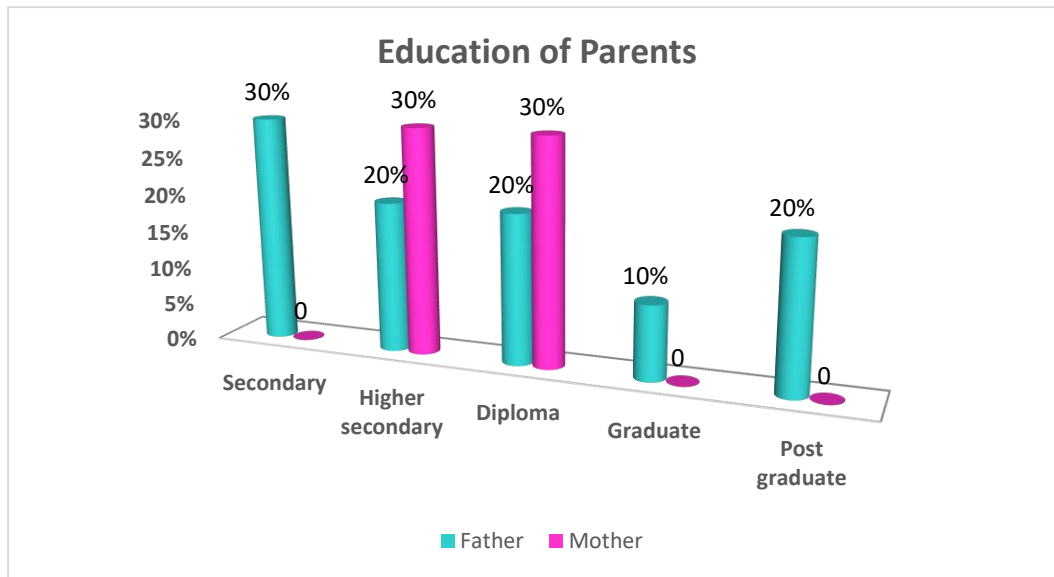


Figure 3: Percentage wise distribution of sample according to education of parents: The data in the figure 3 shows that, among fathers 30% had secondary education, 20% had gone up to higher secondary level, 20% had Diploma, 10% were graduates and 20% were post graduates., among mothers 50% had gone up to higher secondary level and 50% had Diploma.

4. Occupation of parents

N=10

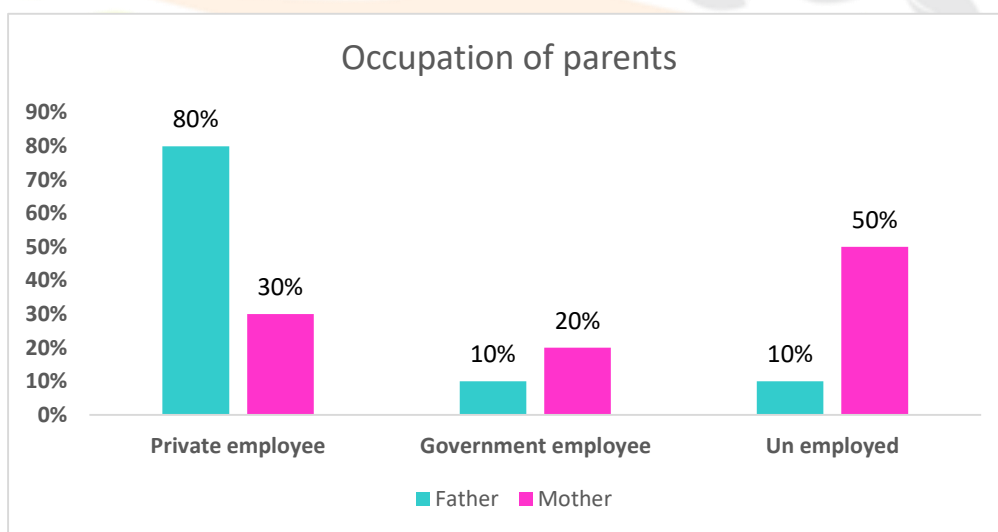


Figure 4: Percentage wise distribution of sample according to Occupation of parents: The data in the figure 4 shows that, among fathers 80% were private employees, 10% were Government employees, and 10% were unemployed., among mothers 30% were private employees, 20% were Government employees, and 50% were unemployed.

## 5. Type of family

N=10

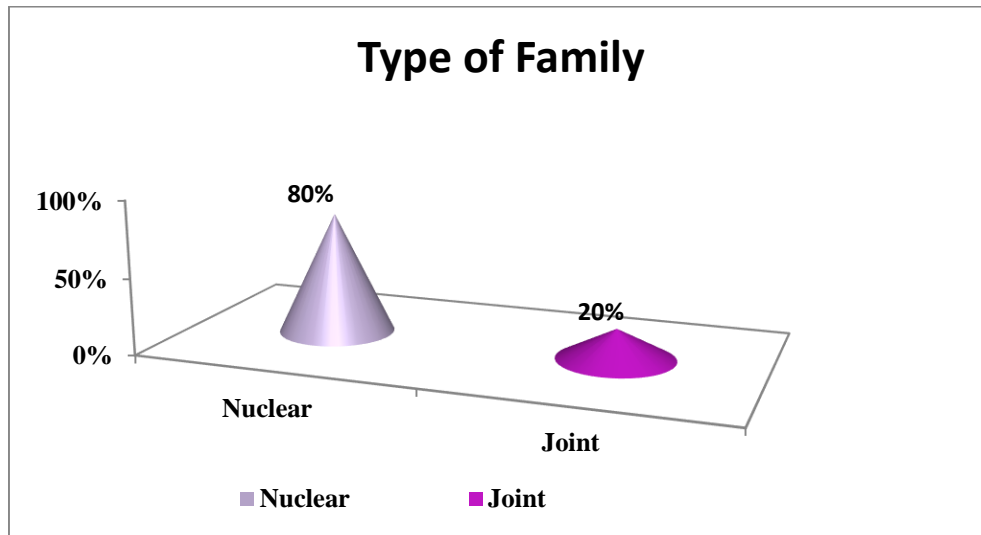


Figure 5: Percentage wise distribution of sample according to Type of Family : The data in the figure 5 shows that, 80% of the samples belongs nuclear family and 20% belongs to joint family.

## 6. Family Income

N=10

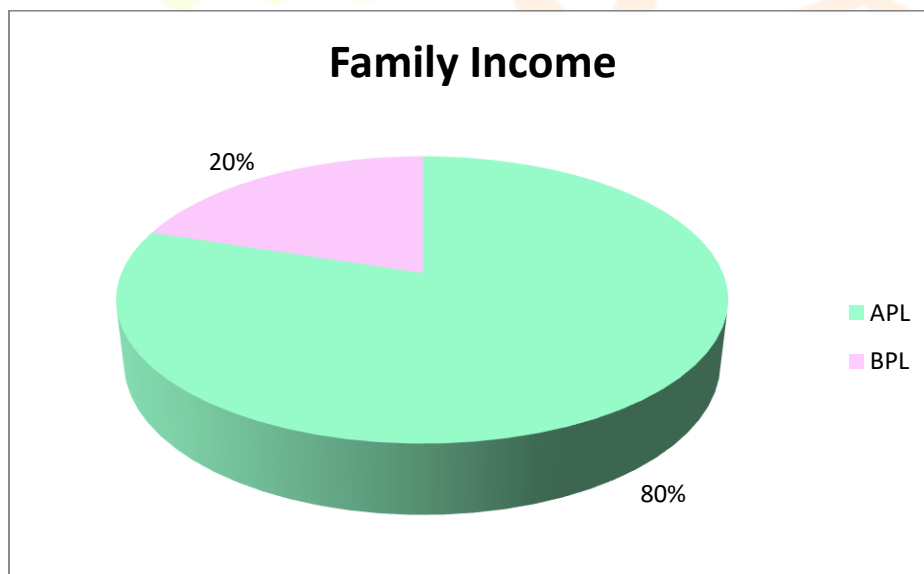


Figure 6: Percentage wise distribution of sample according to Family Income: The data in the figure 6 shows that, 80% of the samples belongs to above poverty line and 20% belongs to below poverty line.

**7. Duration of OBG nursing Clinical experience**

N = 10

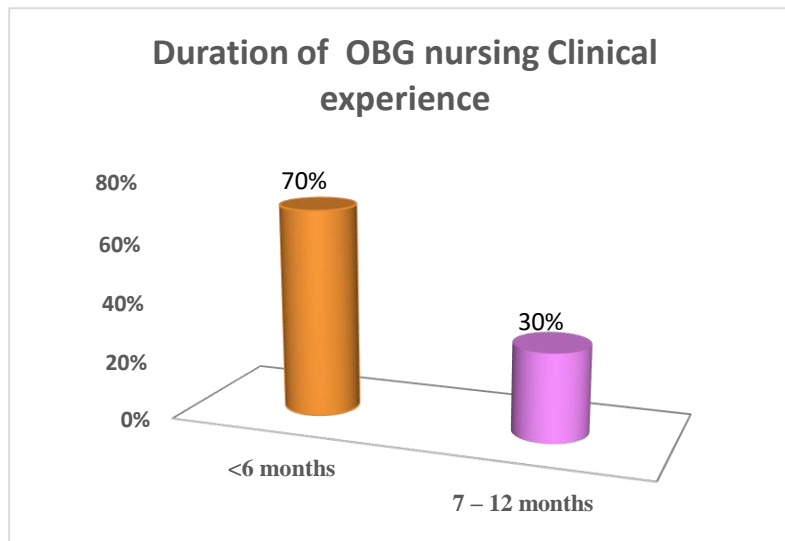


Figure 7: Percentage wise distribution of sample according to Duration of OBG nursing clinical experience: The data in the figure 7 shows that, 70% of the samples had clinical experience less than 6 months and 30% had 7 – 12 months of clinical experience.

**SECTION B: Thematic Analysis**

In the present study, six main themes were identified: Concept regarding obstetrical and gynecological nursing course, Barriers encountered as a male student nurse, Attitude and Behavior of people towards male student nurses, Opinion regarding developing their career in OBG clinical department, Views on members in your family being cared by male obstetric nurse and Suggestions regarding changes in curriculum in OBG specialty.

**Theme: 1 - Concept regarding obstetrical and gynaecological nursing course**

This theme was categorized into 3 sub themes

**Sub theme 1.1 - Before joining the course.**

The participants stated that they did not have much idea about OBG nursing course before joining. They had only vague information of this department from the movies and social media. So they were eager to know about the process happening in the delivery room and Gynec department. They were not able to differentiate between obstetrics and gynaecological departments. They also thought that the study of the subjects will be difficult for them.

*Moreover one of the participants had a misconception that, 'normal delivery is possible for all mothers and the hospitals are forcing mother LSCS in order to mint more money'. (S<sub>4</sub>)*

**Sub theme 1.2 - During training period**

Most of the male students opined that they received real experience during their training period. Though they had their training in the labour room and Gynec ward only for a short period, they could witness a good number of normal delivery and LSCS.

Moreover they got the opportunity to provide proper and meaningful care to the new-born babies and the postnatal mothers. They also noticed and realised the possible complications that might occur before, during, after normal delivery and LSCS. They were also able to differentiate between the obstetrical and gynaecological conditions of women.

*One of the participant stated that "I could establish a link between what I have learned in the theory classes and the practical experience I received in the hospital. I was even fortunate enough to witness the real miracle of life – The miracle of giving birth to a baby through a small vaginal opening. (S<sub>2</sub>)*

**Sub theme 1.3 - After the course**

As per the opinion of the participants, their entire concept about OBG nursing course had changed considerably after the completion of the course. They claimed that they have received a sound and meaningful knowledge regarding theory and the practical aspects. Professionally also they acquired competency in necessary skills specific to OBG nursing.

*One of the participants commended, "OBG course has changed my perception of nursing as a whole. Now I realised that most of the mothers are not aware of the essential requirements to be met during pregnancy. For example many are ignorant of*

*the effect of anaemia during pregnancy. So, my strong suggestion is that health education must be included as an integral part in the curriculum of OBG Nursing. (S<sub>3</sub>)*

*Another participant's view goes like "I feel that it is our responsibility to promote the health of the expectant mothers in order to have healthy children, healthy family, healthy community and healthy Nation." (S<sub>10</sub>)*

## **Theme: 2 - Barriers encountered as a male student nurse**

This theme was categorised into two sub themes

### **Sub theme 2.1- Barriers related to Labour room**

The participants stated that they experienced a lot of distress related to Labour room, as in private hospitals they were not allowed to see the labour process and at times they were made to stand outside by the Labour room staff

(doctor and nurse). But in Government hospitals the condition is much better by providing provisions for male student nurses also to observe the labour process.

One student expressed the dissatisfaction in the following words:

*"As a male, student nurse I faced a lot of adverse situations inside the Labour room. The attitude of the doctors and nurses really pained me. I was not given permission to witness the process in the labour room. Moreover I had to wait outside the labour room doing nothing. But I learned that in Government hospitals male Nursing students and female nursing students are treated alike." (S<sub>1</sub>)*

### **Sub theme 2.2 - Problem faced in the OBG ward**

Male student nurses said that they underwent hardships in the OBG ward too. They were denied to perform antenatal or postnatal examination. The mothers hospitalized, prefer female attendant nurses to do the same. When the mother breastfeeds the baby it was too embarrassing for the mother as well as for us till the feeding was over.

One of the participating student's opinions on this subject was as follows:

*"Mothers treated me as a stranger. I felt embarrassed when they did not want me to enter their room. I feel that it was not comfortable for women to be examined and given care by male doctors and nurses" (S<sub>8</sub>)*

## **Theme 3 - Attitude and Behaviour of people towards male student nurses**

This theme was divided in 3 sub themes.

### **Sub theme 3.1 Attitude and behaviour of patients towards male student nurses.**

Most of the participants expressed the fact that the patients generally showed a positive attitude towards the service of male student nurses, which was always reflected in their behaviour. When the assessment and other procedures were done, patients were very cooperative and supportive. But at the same time a few participants experienced negative attitude of the patients especially with regard to some elderly mothers. They refused to cooperate with the male student nurses while doing assessment and procedures.

*One of the participants shared his experience in the following way "When they experienced the real labour pain, they did not bother about the hospital community around them and the actual process going on in the labour room. But when they were in the antenatal award they did not allow the male nurses touching their body. (S<sub>1</sub>)*

*The experience of another participant: "The women especially postnatal mothers were very cooperative and supportive in all my activities. Moreover they shared their motherhood experience with me very pleasantly and allowed me to do the routine neonatal assessment and new-born care" (S<sub>2</sub>)*

### **Sub theme 3.2 - Attitude and behaviour of the relatives towards the male student nurses.**

Most of the of male student nurses expressed that the relatives, especially those who were at younger age were more receptive and friendly with us. Their approach was really admirable in the sense that they did not exhibit any discomfort while undergoing procedures and assessment by the male nursing students. The noteworthy point was that elderly mothers had a different approach. Most of them were not cooperative and non-supportive. They did not even allow the male nursing students to touch the new-born babies in-order to provide proper neonatal care.

### **Sub theme 3.3 Attitude and behaviour of Healthcare professionals towards male student nurses.**

A vast majority of the students opined that the health care professionals in government sector showed a positive approach towards male nursing students. They were really encouraging us to perform our procedures and assessment. A notable point was that the senior physicians showed much enthusiasm and interest to provide meaningful learning experience to the male nursing students especially with regard to the procedures in the labour room.

The situation in the private hospital was not so encouraging as in government hospitals. Normally the Labour room staff did not allow the male student nurses to enter the Labour room during delivery and other procedures.

*One of the participants posted in Government hospital stated that “when I was in the labour room for night duty, the duty doctor was so eager to let me participate in the normal delivery process and the doctor gave me full support to do the episiotomy suturing. The nursing staff in the labour room were also giving me support to learn the procedures in the labour room. (S<sub>5</sub>)*

#### **Theme 4 - Opinion regarding developing pursuing the career in OBG clinical department**

Many of the male nursing students stressed that they are not interested to pursue their career in OBG clinical area; rather they want to offer their service in some other areas like psychiatric, medical or similar wards.

*One of the participants commanded as “now I did not even think of offering OBG course for my higher studies. If I get a chance I would like to select an area such as psychiatric nursing. In my mind I have no liking towards OBG. (S<sub>9</sub>)*

#### **Theme 5 – Views regarding women in the family being cared by male obstetric nurse**

One student mentioned that *“I feel it is right time to change the negative attitude and behaviour of health care personal, patient and relatives towards male nursing students. It is imperative to change the concept of health care personal, patient and relatives towards male student nurses.”*

*They must also get ample opportunities to provide healthcare to women who are in antenatal, intranatal and postnatal period. The public should encourage more male nursing students to work in OBG clinical area. (S<sub>6</sub>)*

*Another participant commented ‘as in future I won’t mind if my wife is being treated by male obstetric nurse’. In this era of science and technology, I think our mind should be kept positive and the correct attitude must be developed in order to accommodate nurses irrespective of their gender. By encouraging more and more obstetric nurses, to develop their career, we are able to visualize a world with more vistas of knowledge, competency and skills. (S<sub>7</sub>)*

#### **Theme 6 - Suggestions regarding changes in curriculum in OBG speciality**

Majority of participants expressed their view that the change in curriculum will not result in a proper solution to the problem faced by male obstetric student as there is no provision in curriculum to discriminate between male and female student nurses.

In the above scenario what is ultimately needed is the attitude change of people specially the doctors, nurses, patients and their family members.

By emerging a different culture, the attitude, and outlook among the common people there is the possibility of emerging a new society where the discrimination between male and female student nurses does not exist.

## **4.2 Discussion**

The findings of the study revealed that the concept of male student nurses regarding obstetrical and gynaecological nursing course had entirely changed after the completion of the course. They claimed that they have received a sound and meaningful knowledge regarding theory and the practical aspects. Professionally also they acquired competency and necessary skills specific to OBG nursing.

The present study was supported by a similar study conducted in 2013 in Haryana: A study to explore the Perception of Male nursing students towards Obstetrical nursing clinical experience at selected college of nursing in Haryana by Sabita Balakrishnan, Poonam Sheoran, and Ashok Kumar Bishnoi. The findings of the study revealed that all of the participants (100%) had moderately favorable attitude towards obstetrical nursing clinical experience. There was no significant association of attitude scores of male nursing students regarding obstetrical nursing clinical experience with selected personal variables. The major themes emerged from qualitative data were Obstetrical nursing: through the male nurses’ eyes, Moments outside the comfort zone, Walking through obstacles, A helping hand: the motivators, Obstetrical nurse- where will I be?.

The present study revealed the barriers encountered as a male student nurse. The participant stated that they experienced a lot of distress related to Labour room, as in private hospitals they were not allowed to see the labour process and at times they were made to stand outside by the Labour room staff (doctor and nurse). But in Government hospitals the condition is much better by making provisions for male student nurse to observe the labour process. Male student nurses said that they underwent hardships in the OBG ward too. They were denied to perform antenatal or postnatal examination. The mothers hospitalized, prefer female attendant nurses to do the same. When the mother breastfeeds the baby it was too embarrassing for the mother as well as for us till the feeding is over.

In various studies conducted on the issue, it was determined that male students were anxious about the Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing course because they thought that the Gynecology clinic was an area just for women ( Akpinar et al., 2016; Coskuner et al., 2015). In Karadag et al.’s study conducted with 189 female and 107 male students to determine their



opinions about the difficulties they encountered during clinical practices and their opinions of clinical nurse specialists, 55.7% of the nursing students had problems in clinical practices and that the rate of problems experienced by the nursing students increased after the first year of their education (Karadag et al., 2013). Our results are consistent with those of Karadag et al.'s study.

The findings of the present study revealed the Attitude and Behaviour of people towards male student nurses. Most of the participants expressed that the patients generally showed a positive attitude towards their service, which was reflected in their behaviour. At the same time a few participants had to cope with the negative attitude of the patients especially with regard to some elderly mothers.

Number of male student nurses expressed that the relatives, especially those who were at a younger age were more receptive and friendly. Their approach was really admirable in the sense that they did not exhibit any discomfort while undergoing procedures and assessment by the male nursing students. A noteworthy point was that elderly mothers had a different approach.

A vast majority of the students opined that the health care professionals in government sector had a positive approach towards male nursing students. The situation in the private hospital was not so encouraging like in government hospitals.

The present study was supported by another study. The difficulties encountered by the male students during the theoretical and practical courses in the nursing curriculum increase their anxiety levels and affect their learning adversely. In particular, the attitudes of their instructors in the clinical setting, behaviors displayed towards them by the members of the health team, patients and their relatives directly influence their putting what they have learned in the theoretical part of the courses into practice, acquiring skills, providing quality nursing service, love of the profession and length of employment in the profession (Peyrovi et al., 2005; Wedgeworth, 2016).

In the present study, many of the male nursing students stressed that they are not interested to pursue their career in OBG clinical area; rather they want to offer their service in some other areas like psychiatric, medical or similar wards. Another participant commented as in future I won't mind if my wife is being treated by male obstetric nurse. In the era of science and technology, I think our mind should be kept positive and the correct attitude must be developed in order to accommodate nurses irrespective of their gender. Majority of participants expressed their view that the change in curriculum will not result in a proper solution to the problem faced by male obstetric student as there is no provision in curriculum to discriminate between male and female student nurses. In the above scenario what is ultimately needed is the attitude change of people specially the doctors, nurses, patients and their family members. By emerging a different culture, attitude and outlook among the common people there is the possibility of emerging a new society where the discrimination between male and female student nurses is never possible.

The present study was supported by another study conducted with Palestinian women (2012), Hassan et al. In their study, they found that women wanted to be examined not by physicians but by female midwives (Hassan et al., 2012). A study (2007a) conducted on the views of women patients regarding care given to them by male nurses, Tasci determined that more than half of them did not want to receive nursing care from male nurses (Tasci, 2007a) In their study (2012) on the same issue, Celik et al. determined that pregnant women felt uncomfortable with male nurses and that they wanted male nurses to work in clinics other than the Obstetrics and Gynecology clinics (Celik et al., 2012). In a study by Duman (2012) almost all of the women (96.7%) hospitalized in the Obstetrics and Gynecology clinic wanted to receive healthcare only from female nurses during pregnancy and delivery (Duman, 2012). Our findings are consistent with those of other studies.

The vast majority of the participants in the present study did not want to work in Obstetrics and Gynecology clinics after they graduated and the society's and women's negative attitudes towards them and their opinion that they would not be able to perform their profession adequately in these conditions were the factors affecting their decisions. In their study (2017), Ashkenazi et al. reported that prejudices of the community were one of the major obstacles faced by male nurses (Ashkenazi et al., 2017). In Akpinar et al.'s and Tasci's studies on this issue, 12% and 44% of the male nurses respectively did not want to work in the maternity clinics (Akpinar et al., 2016; Tasci, 2007b). Positive hospital experiences of male nurse students will help them have positive feelings rather than negative feelings about this subject. Therefore, if gender prejudices of the society are to be eliminated, if males are to be recruited in nursing, and if nursing shortage, resignations from the profession and early retirement are to be prevented, conducting more studies on this issue is of great importance.

### 4.3 Conclusions and Recommendations

In the present study, most of the participants had negative prejudices about the clinical practice before taking the Obstetrics and Gynecology Nursing course, half of the students were not welcomed by the women in the Obstetrics and Gynecology clinic and therefore they could not put what they learned in the course into practice. Nearly all of the participants did not want to work in Obstetrics and Gynecology clinics after graduation. In line with these results, in order for male students to take a qualified nursing education and to be recruited in the profession, it is recommended that they should participate in orientation programs, the prejudices of the society should be eliminated and status update meetings should be held.

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