

THE ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE OF MEDICAL STUDENTS REGARDING DEMENTIA



Josip Stojić¹, Milan Milošević^{1,2}, Marina Boban^{1,3}

¹School of Medicine, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia;

²Andrija Štampar School of Public Health, Zagreb, Croatia;

³Department of Neurology, University Hospital Centre Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

Background

- Due to aging of the population majority of doctors are likely to spend more time caring for people with dementia.
- The aim was to determine the medical students' knowledge and attitudes regarding dementia.

Material & Methods

- Subjects: final-year medical students at the School of Medicine, University of Zagreb
- The paper-and-pencil questionnaire included questions on sociodemographic data; overall and specific success during the study; attitudes towards dementia; knowledge of dementia; a Croatian version of The Alzheimer's Disease Knowledge Scale (ADKS) (Carpenter et al., 2009).

Results

- 231 participants; age 24.17±1.00; male (33.8%) vs. female (66.2%)
- Overall success during the study 4.24±0.43; grade in Neurology 4.32±0.82; grade in Psychiatry 4.69±0.54
- Interested in Neurology and Cognitive Neurology 3.00±1.08 (range 1-5)

Data are presented as mean±SD unless otherwise specified.

Table 1. Medians (Mdn), Interquartile Ranges (IQR) and ranges of focal continuous variables.

Variable	N	Mdn	IQR	Range
Attitudes towards dementia score	231	38.0	7.0	25-58
Knowledge of AD score	231	13.0	5.0	2-20
ADKS scores	227*	22.0	4.0	11-28

*4 participants did not complete ADKS

Table 2. Knowledge of Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. (N=231)

Question category	Mdn	IQR	Range
Clinical Features	6.0	2.0	0-8
Risk Factors	1.0	1.0	0-2
Treatment	3.0	2.0	0-5
Diagnosis	1.0	1.0	0-3
Differential Diagnosis	0.0	1.0	0-2
Epidemiology	0.0	0.0	0-1
Pathogenesis	0.0	0.0	0-1

Table 3. Spearman correlation coefficients.

	Grade Point Average	Grade in Neurology
Knowledge of AD score (N=231)	0.218*	0.311**
ADKS scores (N=227)	0.018	0.007

*p = 0.001, **p < 0.001

Conclusion

- Our findings indicate that medical students in their final year have mostly neutral attitudes towards dementia and low scores on both dementia tests.
- Relatively neutral attitudes did not affect knowledge of dementia (on both dementia tests).
- Among all data, only overall success during the medical study and grade on Neurology exam correlate significantly with Alzheimer's disease knowledge scores, but not ADKS.
- Additional undergraduate education on dementia may improve attitudes, knowledge and skills.