

EVALUATION OF HEPATITIS C KNOWLEDGE AMONG MEDICAL AND NURSING STUDENTS AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY OF NEWFOUNDLAND

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ABSTRACT: Poster (2E)

- Purpose:** To assess the level of Hepatitis C knowledge and awareness among current medical and nursing students at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN). To advocate for better training and education on Hepatitis C knowledge among healthcare trainees.
- Methods:** An electronic questionnaire containing 10 multiple choice questions assessing knowledge and awareness of Hepatitis C was distributed via email to all current medical (319) and nursing students (260) at MUN for voluntary response during the month of September 2017.
- Results:** Total of 88 responses collected with no incomplete responses (electronic survey did not permit individual questions to be skipped). 57 medical students and 30 nursing students responded (64%/35%). Response rate of 17.9% (57/319) among medical students and 11.5% (30/260) nursing students, for a total response rate of 15.0%. Mean score is 24% (2.2/9), with 90% of the respondents (79/88) answering less than half the questions correctly. 31% (27/88) of the responders are 1st year medical students with a mean score of 22%.
- Conclusion:** While acknowledging the limited sample size (88) of this study and appreciating the fact that 41% of the respondents were first year medical or nursing students, it is clearly evident that Hepatitis C knowledge and awareness is low among healthcare trainees, and can be expected to be even lower among the general public. Healthcare professional trainees are expected to have a better knowledge base of Hepatitis C than the general population and increasing their awareness of this disease early in their education could have a profound impact on improving the diagnostic rate of Hepatitis C later in their established careers. This study shows that better educational efforts on the topic of Hepatitis C are warranted at the undergraduate level as well as the general public. It is evident that Hepatitis C has been acting as a low profile assassin; therefore, advocacy for increased awareness and training effort among both the general public and healthcare professionals will be key to stopping this silent epidemic.