

Assessment of attitude in KAP study: A comment on: A survey on doctors' knowledge and attitude of treating chronic pain in three tertiary hospitals in Nigeria

Sir,

This is in reference to the article, 'A survey on doctors' knowledge and attitude of treating chronic pain in three tertiary hospitals in Nigeria' published in Niger Med J 2014;55:106-10.¹ The authors have worked well in direction of assessing attitude and knowledge of doctors in three teaching hospitals in Nigeria to CP.

However, I have a few concerns regarding the questions used to assess knowledge, attitude and practice component in this KAP Study.

Knowledge is one's capacity for imagining and one's way of perceiving.²

Attitude is an intermediate variable between the situation and the response to this situation. It helps explain that among the possible practices for a subject submitted to a stimulus, the subject adopts one practice and not another.

Practices or behaviours are the observable actions of an individual in response to a stimulus.²

For example in Table 2, the authors have mentioned the questions as, 'Gender affects pain perception', 'Appropriate for patients to request for additional pain medication' and 'Majority of chronic pains are undertreated in Nigeria' to assess the attitude of physicians attitude towards chronic pain. These questions actually tell us about the knowledge of physicians and not their attitude.¹

Similarly in Table 3, asking about 'Goal of chronic pain management' give us the attitude parameter of the physicians and not the practice component as given by the authors.¹

Furthermore, 58% of participants were resident doctors, 36.4% medical officers and 8.64% consultants, and only few (23.3%) had received formal training on pain. However, the point of concern is that the level of knowledge will vary from the resident doctors or medical officers to the

level of consultants. Those who had special training on pain management will have further edge on answering the knowledge questions and will be better in practising the chronic pain management. Hence, clubbing such variegated participants together for arriving at mean scores does not seem justifiable.

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