



## Cross-sectional Study

# Awareness and its associated factors towards anesthesia and anesthetists' among elective surgical patients in Debre Tabor Comprehensive Specialized Hospital, North Central Ethiopia 2021: Cross-sectional study

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Patient awareness level of anesthesia and anesthetist is not well known in the study area which makes patients blind about the risk and benefits of anesthesia and the role of anesthetists'. This study aimed to assess elective surgical patients' awareness and its associated factors of anesthesia and anesthetists' in Debre tabor comprehensive specialized Hospital, north-central Ethiopia, 2021.

**Method:** Institutional based cross-sectional study was conducted on 367 patients who underwent for elective general surgery in Debre Tabor Comprehensive Specialized Hospital from December 15, 2020, up to May 15, 2021. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire of 13 items after translating the English version to the local language (Amharic). Descriptive statistics were expressed in percentage and presented with tables. Bivariable and multivariable logistic analysis were done to identify factors associated with the awareness level of patients on anesthesia and anesthetists. Statistical significance level was set at  $P < 0.05$  with 95 % CI.

**Results:** In this study, 25.1 % [95 % CI= (20.7–29.6)] of patients were adequately aware of anesthesia and anesthetist. Multivariable logistic analyses showed that male patients [AOR = 1.90; 95 % CI= (1.03–3.52)], level of education of secondary school [AOR = 3.20; 95 % CI= (1.07–9.61)] and collage and above [AOR = 4.75; 95 % CI= (1.73–13.06)], patients from Urban [AOR = 6.34; 95 % CI= (3.01–13.39)], and patients with previous anesthesia exposure [AOR = 3.43; 95 % CI= (1.76–6.69)] were more aware of anesthesia and anesthetist than their counterparts.

**Conclusion:** The awareness level of patients about anesthesia and anesthetists in this study was poor. Sex, residency, educational level, and previous anesthesia exposure were factors associated with patients' awareness level of anesthesia and anesthetists.

## 1. Introduction

Patient awareness is an important component of anesthesia care service that helps patients to know the risk and benefits of anesthesia and the scope of practice of anesthetists. It also increases patient preference-based anesthesia services [1–3]. The awareness level of patients in developed countries ranges from 18% to 89 % [4].

Currently, Anesthesia is advancing in the knowledge of medical professionals, pharmaceutical drugs, and technological equipment to deliver the safest anesthesia care service for patients [5,6]. But, awareness and image of the community and patient about anesthesia as well as the role of anesthetists is always a problem especially in developing countries [7–9].

Patient awareness about anesthesia and the role of anesthetists can be influenced by patient-related barriers such as poor educational level and anesthesia exposure, as well as health professionals' related problems such as deficit in community awareness creation and patient education [3,10,11].

Developing counties such as Ethiopia, have a shortage of anesthesia providers with limited service providers and limited resources to deliver anesthesia [12–14]. Also, a low level of patient education strategies and reduced governmental focuses on awareness creation with media hinders the awareness level of the patients about anesthesia and the role of anesthetists [12,15,16].

Even though few studies in anesthesia have assessed patient awareness about anesthesia and anesthetists, those are restricted to specific areas of surgical patients (1). Patient awareness about anesthesia and

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awareness questions about anesthesia and anesthetists are answered correctly by patients (1).

**Not aware of anesthesia and anesthetists:** When less than 50 % of awareness questions about anesthesia and anesthetists are answered by patients (1).

### 3. Result

#### 3.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of patients

A total of 367 elective surgical patients were involved in the study, but 362 patients have completed the survey with a response rate of 98.6 %. Five incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the data. The majority of patients were with the age of (25–39, 32.1 %) and male gender (217, 59.9 %). A large number of patients were from rural areas (210, 58.0 %) and illiterate (124, 34.3 %) (Table 1).

#### 3.2. Awareness level of patients about anesthesia and anesthetist

The mean patients' awareness level about anesthesia and anesthetist was 4.7 with a standard deviation of (SD = 3.5). The majority of patients; 75 (20.7 %) scored a mean of 3 while about 5 (1.4 %) of patients were aware of all awareness questions. Only a few numbers 91 (25.1 %) [95 % CI= (20.7–29.6)] of patients were adequately aware of anesthesia and anesthetist. Anesthesia is necessary for surgery 362 (100.0 %) and anesthetists are responsible to administer anesthesia 259 (71.5 %) were the most correctly responded awareness questions. While the type of anesthetic drugs used to deliver anesthesia and roles of anesthetists were aware of few respondents (Table 2).

#### 3.3. Factors associated with an awareness level of patients to anesthesia and anesthetist

The bivariable logistic analyses showed that, sex, educational level, residency and previous anesthesia exposure were significantly

**Table 1**  
Socio-demographic characteristics of patients (n = 362).

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age(years)</b>	75	20.7
18–24	99	27.3
25–39	116	32.1
50 and above	72	19.9
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	217	59.9
Female	145	40.1
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	109	30.1
Married	211	58.3
Widowed	20	5.5
Divorced	22	6.1
<b>Residency</b>		
Urban	152	42.0
Rural	210	58.0
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Illiterate	124	34.3
read and write	103	28.5
primary school	34	9.4
secondary school	31	8.6
college and above	70	19.3
<b>Job</b>		
No occupation	13	3.6
House wife	68	18.8
Farmer	139	38.4
Student	52	14.3
Government employ	43	11.9
Private employ	47	13.0
<b>Previous anesthesia exposure</b>		
Yes	78	21.5
No	284	78.5

**Table 2**  
Awareness level of patients about anesthesia and anesthetist.

Variables	Correctly answered No (%)	Wrongly answered No (%)
<b>Awareness about anesthesia</b>		
Do you think anesthesia is necessary for surgery?	362 (100.0 %)	0 (0.0 %)
What are the different types of anesthesia?	94 (26.0 %)	268 (74.0 %)
Which anesthetic drugs are used during surgery?	72 (19.9 %)	290 (80.1 %)
Two hours before surgery what foods are allowed?	92 (25.4 %)	270 (74.6 %)
What are the complications of anesthesia?	77 (21.3 %)	285 (78.7 %)
If patients have coexisting disease/smoker or alcoholic risk of complication increases?	211 (58.3 %)	151 (41.7 %)
<b>Awareness about anesthetists</b>		
Who is responsible for administering anesthesia?	259 (71.5 %)	103 (28.5 %)
Who determines whether the patient is fit for anesthesia or surgery?	99 (27.3 %)	263 (72.7 %)
Who decides if the patient can eat before surgery?	95 (26.2 %)	267 (73.8 %)
What do you think about the role of the anesthetist in the operation room?	108 (29.8 %)	254 (70.2 %)
Who estimates and transfuses blood when needed during operation?	88 (24.3 %)	274 (75.7 %)
Who makes sure the patient recovers smoothly after surgery?	93 (25.7 %)	269 (74.3 %)
In which of the following roles are anesthetists involved?	48 (13.3 %)	314 (86.7 %)

associated with awareness level of patients about anesthesia and anesthetist. Also, in multivariable logistic regression, sex [AOR = 1.90; 95 % CI= (1.03–3.52)], level of education [AOR = 3.20; 95 % CI= (1.07–9.61)] and [AOR = 4.75; 95 % CI= (1.73–13.06)], residency [AOR = 6.34; 95 % CI= (3.01–13.39)], and previous anesthesia exposure [AOR = 3.43; 95 % CI= (1.76–6.69)] were significantly associated with awareness level.

According to the result, male patients were almost 1.9 times more likely to be aware of anesthesia and anesthetists than females. Likewise, patients with the educational level of college and above as well secondary school were 4.75 vs. 3.20 times more likely to be aware than illiterates respectively.

Also, the likelihood of being from urban was 6.34 times more aware than being from a rural while; those patients who were exposed to anesthesia previously were 3.43 times more to be aware of their counterparts (Table 3).

### 4. Discussion

Lack of awareness about anesthesia and anesthetist is a great problem in anesthesia practice (19, 20). However, it can be improved by delivering health information regarding anesthesia and anesthetist with verities of health information delivering systems of the ministry of health or patient education by health professionals [20].

This study revealed that only 25.1 % of patients were adequately aware of anesthesia and anesthetist. This finding is lower than a study done in Britain, Hong Kong, Korea, and Ethiopia at Black Lion specialized hospital anesthetist [1,19,21,22]. The possible explanation for variation might be due to study participants' differences in information delivery about anesthesia and the accessibility of anesthesia professionals.

The highest level of awareness was seen on “anesthesia is necessary for surgery and anesthetists are responsible to administer anesthetic drugs”. This result is nearly similar to a study done in Ethiopia and India [1,23]. Also, the lowest level of awareness was seen on “the type of anesthetic drugs used to deliver anesthesia and the roles of anesthetists”. This is similar to a study done in Pakistan which showed patients were less aware of the roles of anesthetists [2].

In this study male patients were more associated with awareness anesthesia and anesthetists than females. This finding was also similar to

**Table 3**  
Factors associated with an awareness level of patients to anesthesia and anesthesiologist (n = 362).

Variables	Awareness level		Crude odds ratio (95 % CI)	Adjusted odds ratio (95 % CI)	p-value
	Aware	Not aware			
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	62 (28.6%)	155 (71.4%)	1.89 (1.02,3.52)	1.90 (1.03,3.52)	0.041*
Female	29 (20%)	116 (80.0%)	1	1	
<b>Level of education</b>					
Illiterate	12 (9.2%)	119 (90.8%)	1	1	
read and write	15 (14.6%)	88 (85.4%)	1.05 (0.41,2.71)	0.91 (0.36,2.29)	0.83
primary school	10 (29.4%)	24 (70.6%)	2.13 (0.68,6.65)	1.77 (0.59,5.31)	0.310
secondary school	12 (38.7%)	19 (61.3%)	4.05 (1.26,13.04)	3.20 (1.07,9.61)	0.038*
college and above	42 (66.7%)	21 (33.3%)	5.90 (2.07,16.85)	4.75 (1.73,13.06)	0.003*
<b>Residency</b>					
Urban	74 (50.3%)	73 (49.7%)	6.14 (2.89,13.05)	6.34 (3.01,13.39)	0.00*
Rural	17 (7.9%)	198 (92.1%)	1		
<b>Previous anesthesia exposure</b>					
Yes	33 (41.8%)	46 (58.2%)	3.08 (1.56,6.06)	3.43 (1.76,6.69)	0.00*
No	58 (20.5%)	225 (79.5%)	1		

\* = p-value<0.05, 1 = reference.

studies done in India and Ethiopia [1,24]. Also, regarding the residency of the patients, this study depicted that living in Urban was more associated with a high awareness level than rural. This result was in-lined with studies done in Ethiopia (1). The possible explanation for this might be, coming from urban areas are expected to be more informed about medical issues and get access to health information than rural.

This study showed that there is a positive association between level of education and awareness level about anesthesia and anesthesiologists in which patients with higher educational levels were more aware of it. This result is repeated in a study done in Ethiopia, Pakistan, India, Nigeria, and Saudi Arabia [1,2,24-26]. The possible explanation for this might be education might improve the awareness level of medical knowledge.

Regarding previous anesthesia exposure of the patients, this study depicted that patients who were previously exposed to anesthesia were more associated with the awareness level of anesthesia and anesthesiologists than none exposed to anesthesia. This was similar to studies done in Pakistan, India, and Australia [2,24,27]. But this result is a reverse in a study done in Ethiopian at Tikur Anbessa Specialized Hospital (1). The possible explanation for this variation might be differences in study populations' location, literacy level, and access to medical services or information.

## 5. Conclusion

The awareness level of patients about anesthesia and anesthesiologists in this study was poor. Sex, residency, educational level, and previous anesthesia exposure were factors associated with patients' awareness level of anesthesia and anesthesiologists. So, it is suggested that the ministry of health and health professionals must plan strategies of awareness creation of patients about anesthesia and anesthesiologists.

### 5.1. Strength of the study

Study participants were homogeneous and data was collected with few none response rates.

### 5.2. Limitations of the study

The limitation of this study was first, it was conducted at a single health organization which might not generalize other organizations' patient awareness levels. Second, a high percentage of illiterate patients might affect the strength of the study. Additionally, randomization and blinding were not applied.

### Availability of data and material

The data of this study will be available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

### Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare there is no competing interest in this work.

### Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned, externally peer-reviewed.

### Declaration of competing interest

Nothing to declare.

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### Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amsu.2021.102640>.

### Ethical approval

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Debre Tabor University ethical clearance committee.

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Nothing to declare.

### Author contribution

All authors equally contributed to the study concept or design, data collection, data analysis or interpretation, writing the paper.

## Registration of research studies

Name of the registry: <http://www.researchregistry.com>.

Unique Identifying number or registration ID: researchregistry6930.

Hyperlink to your specific registration (must be publicly accessible and will be checked): [https://www.researchregistry.com/browse-the-registry#home/?view\\_2\\_sort=field\\_21|asc](https://www.researchregistry.com/browse-the-registry#home/?view_2_sort=field_21|asc).

## Guarantor

Mr. Yewlsew Fentie.

## Consent

Informed consent was taken from study participants after telling them the aim of the study, benefit, harm of participating in the study, and they have been told as they can withdraw from the study at any step if they feel so.

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