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AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SPEECH -LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY IN MBBS STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Objectives:

The aim of the study is to investigate the level of awareness and knowledge of Speech Language Pathology among MBBS students in Province Three of Nepal.

Materials and methods:

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out. It was carried out in December 2017 among medical students. Only the colleges having speech language pathologists working as a academicians were included in the study. The study was carried out by distributing the questionnaire developed by Breadner with slight modification to reflect the Nepali culture. Statistical analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS software version 25.

Results:

Among 119 MBBS students 63.90 % were male and 36.10 % were female. Majority of the students had never heard about Speech-Language Pathology and only few reported to know speech language pathologists' (SLP) works and the population with whom SLPs work. The major source of information about this new field was from "Friends". Few reported to know SLPs as a part of their hospital staff and also as their teaching faculty.

Conclusion:

Limited interaction of students with Speech-language Pathologist might be a strong reason for very little awareness and knowledge about Speech-language pathology field.

Keywords: Awareness, MBBS students, Speech disorders, Speech Language Pathologists, Speech therapy

INTRODUCTION

Speech language pathology is a field concerned with the study of human communication disorders, assessment and treatment of swallowing, speech-language and cognitive-communication disorders those results in communication disabilities.¹ This includes disorder of speech, voice, language and swallowing.² The professionals who deals with identification, diagnosis and treatment of disorders are called as speech language pathologist (SLP) or speech language therapist (SLT). World health Organisation (WHO) has estimated that millions of children suffer from communication disorders every year.³

SLP work as a part of multidisciplinary team with other professionals such as ENT Surgeons, Physicians, Nurses, Psychologist, Neurologist and Physiotherapist.⁴ As the fields of speech language pathology is new in Nepal and there are limited numbers of speech language pathologists in Nepal, most of the students, doctors and public are not aware of the facility provided by speech language pathologist. Only limited number of hospitals have speech therapy service at their center and hence most of public are unaware of this new service. This has been the reason that the working in hospital are also not aware of speech language pathology service in Nepal

and it has been a reason for fewer referrals for communication disorders to the speech language pathologist.

It is necessary to know about the role of speech language pathologist and the communication disorders for the profession to grow.⁵ Awareness about speech language pathology will allow the medical students to make referral with the related disorders to speech language pathologist. The survey made by (ASHA) in 2013 indicated lack of awareness as an important barrier for early detection of communication disorders.⁶ Numerous studies have been conducted globally pertaining to measure the awareness of speech language pathology and also regarding awareness about speech language disorders in public and other health professionals. Studies also have been conducted to investigate the prevalence of communication disorders. These studies have vital role in raising public awareness and planning service delivery for prevention of disorders.⁷ Therefore, this study aims to investigate about the awareness and knowledge of speech language pathology field MBBS students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out in MBBS studying student of three medical college of province three. All these colleges had speech language pathologist working in their hospital. Data was collected based on a questionnaire developed in English by Breadner et al (1987). To ensure the validity few changes were made in the questionnaire so that it should reflect the Nepali culture. The questionnaire contains many sections which included demographic data and awareness about speech language pathology, work place of speech pathology, work role of speech pathologist. The questionnaire was distributed in MBBS studying students of these medical colleges. Statistical analysis was carried out with the help of SPSS software version where each item on questionnaire was assigned a code before the analysis. Only descriptive analysis was carried out in this study and it was summarized in percentages.

RESULTS

There were total number of 119 MBBS studying students enrolled in the study. 76(63.9%) were male and 43(36.1%) were female. Most common age

group was 20-24 years (79), followed by 25-34 years (34), 18-19 years (6). Out of total students enrolled in study, 92.4 % were unmarried and 7.6 % were married. Total three medical college students participated in the study, out of which 49.6 % were from Maharajgunj Medical College (MMC), 35.3% were from Chitwan Medical College (CMC) and 15.1 % were from Patan Academy of Health Science (PAHS) (Fig. I).

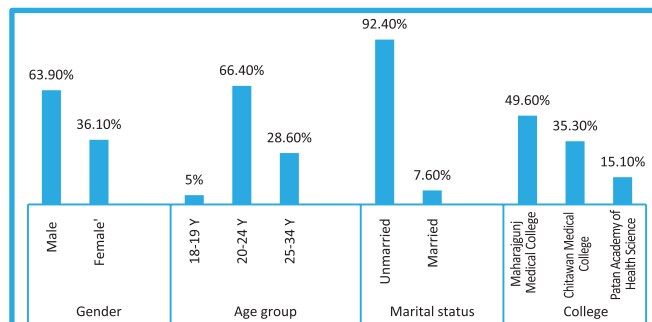


Fig I. Demographic characteristics of students

Among the total students, 64.7 % of students had no idea and knowledge about Speech-Language Pathology while 35.3 % had some knowledge about speech language pathology. Out of students who had awareness about speech language pathology, 16.0 % reported that it's a field that deals with speech disorder, 1.7 % reported that it deals with speech therapy and 17.6% of students were able to name few speech and language disorders (Figure II).

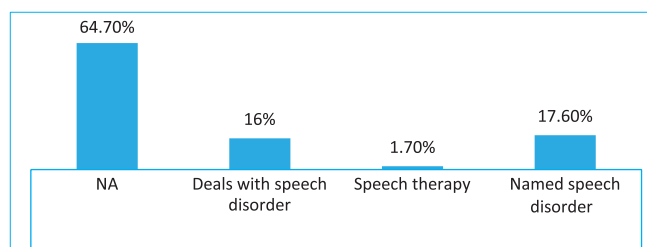


Fig II. Knowledge about Speech-Language Pathology

about speech language pathologist, whereas 51.3 % have heard about speech language pathologist from different sources like Newspaper (9.2 %), Book(11.8 %), Magazine (2.5 %), Friends (12.6%), Hospital (7.6 %) and other multiple sources (7.6 %) (Figure III).

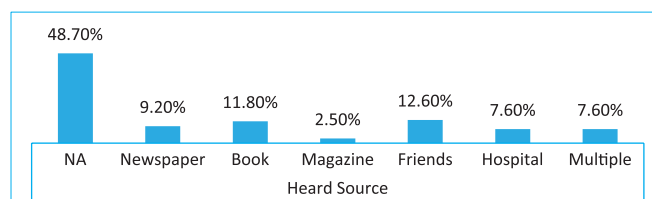


Fig III. Source of information about Speech-Language Pathology field for the students

Among 119 students, 68.9 % reported that they do not know any SLPs. However, 31.1 % reported to know few SLPs. From the student who knew SLP as friend (7.6 %), as hospital staff (14.3 %) , as teaching faculties (8.4 %), as others and relatives (0.8 %) (Fig IV).

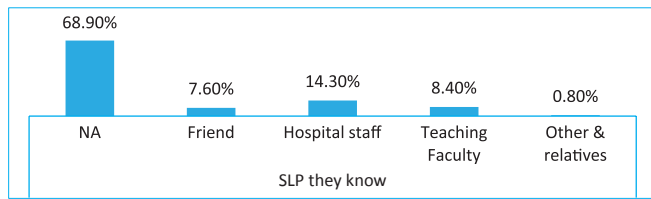


Fig IV. Speech-Language Pathologist that are known to students

Among 119 Students, 62.2 % of students were not able to identify the institute where SLPs works but 37.8 % students were correctly, able to identify where SLPs works. Out of which 14.3 % student reported SLPs to work in Chitwan Medical college, 29.4 % in TUTH and 0.8 % reported SLPs work in PAHS.

In the study 47.9 % students reported, they had never met any SLPs and 52.1 % reported to have met SLPs. Out of the students who met SLPs, 18.5 % had met SLPs in their college and hospital, 15.1 % had met in their posting during internship and 2.5 % had met SLPs during their lecture class. Among 119 students, most had limited knowledge on the population SLPs work with, out of which 7.6 % reported SLPs to work with infant, 12.6 % reported SLPs to work with preschool children 1.7 % reported SLPs to work with adult, 19.3 % reported SLPs to work with children, 0.8 % reported SLPs to work with geriatrics and 58 % reported multiple answers which included all

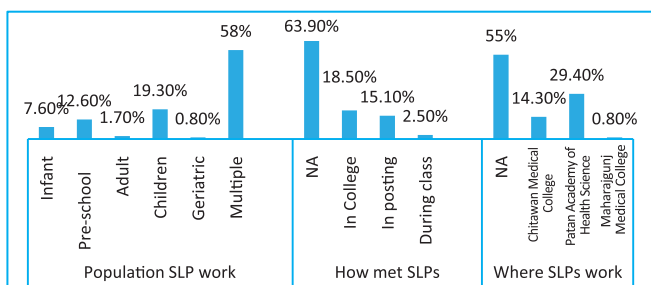


Fig V. Population Speech-Language Pathologist work, How they met Speech-Language Pathology, Where Speech-Language Pathologist work

the responses (Figure V). Among 119 students, 29.4 % reported the SLP to work clinically require 1 years of training, 10.9 % reported 2 years of training, 21 % reported 3 years of training, 38.7

% reported that SLPs require 4 years of training to work as an SLPs.

DISCUSSION

Speech language pathology is a field concerned with dealing and treating speech and communication related disorders. This field is at its growing phase in Nepal. So, most of public in Nepal are not aware about this field and the professional dealing with communication disorder. The result of the present study reflected that the awareness about speech language pathology was very less among medical students even though they are medically related to this field of practice. This gives clear evidence that MBBS students were less exposed to the speech language pathologist. About 64.7% of students reported they have never heard about speech language pathology and among those who reported that they had heard about this field were able to name few speech disorders. This may be due to the facts that there are very few SLPs working in hospital of Nepal as the profession is at the growing phase and there is no direct touch between patients and speech language pathologist as they get most referrals from other doctors. Pereira et al. found public awareness about stuttering was limited and its knowledge differed according to age, gender and educational level.⁸ Moreover, 48.7 % of the students have never heard about SLPs and they reported that friends and hospital were the major source of information. Also, majority of students who knew SLPs, reported to know them as a hospital staff. The reason may be the students are posted during their clinical posting at speech therapy department and interacts with clinical staff and students. Parson et al. reported less public awareness about speech language pathologist and service provided by Speech- Language pathologist.⁹ In this study, 52.1 % reported they have met SLPs, among them majority of them had met them in their respective hospital and college. This may be due to the reason that MBBS students lectures on speech language pathology topics as a part of their curriculum in few medical colleges. Ingrid et al. found older people were more aware of aphasia compared to young and magazine and newspaper was the major source of knowledge on aphasia.¹⁰ The results of the present study also showed the knowledge about the MBBS students on the population SLPs work and 19.3 % reported SLPs to work with children compared to all other age groups. This can be due to more referral made

for children by other allied professional to SLPs and also the short duration clinical observation of MBBS student in speech therapy department made them observe limited varieties of cases at the department. Mahmud et al. found public were less familiar about communication disorder.¹¹ In this study, only 37.8 % students were correctly able to identify the places in Nepal where SLPs work and the course related to speech language pathology was taught. The majority of the students reported SLPs and the course to be taught in TU teaching hospital while few reported them to work in Patan Academy of Health Science and Chitwan Medical Colleges. The reason could be the medical colleges having a SLPs working as a part of their hospital and students sometime have interaction with them.

Our study had limitation of smaller sample size as well as inclusion of fewer medical colleges limited to only one province only. The other limitation was that the colleges that had SLPs working were only included in the study. Study with larger sample size and all medical colleges would give more representative data.

CONCLUSION

The MBBS students had limited awareness and knowledge about Speech language pathology and service they provide. Limited manpower, lesser interaction and very limited exposure of medical students with Speech- language pathologist could be the significant factors for limited awareness about speech language pathology among MBBS students.

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