ASSESSMENT OF PHARMACY STUDENTS’ KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GERIATRIC PHARMACY EDUCATION AND OLDER ADULTS: FINDINGS FROM MULTIPLE UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA

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Objective: The proportion of the Malaysian geriatrics has increased from 1 million to 2.2 million between 1991 to 2010. This increment will make up a greater proportion of the clinical work of almost every healthcare providers. Consequently, the need of geriatric care education will increase. This study attempted to assess the pharmacy students’ knowledge and attitude towards geriatric education and older people to gauge their preparedness to provide a quality care to this population.

Design or Method: A self-administered questionnaires were distributed among final-year pharmacy students in 5 different public and private Universities in the Klang Valley area, Malaysia. The survey included 3 sections: sociodemographic section, assessment of knowledge section using a validated 28-item Geriatric Knowledge Assessment Scale (to measure students’ geriatric knowledge in the areas of aging disease, physical activity, drug therapy, and nutrition) and assessment of attitudes towards geriatrics education.

Results: A total of 311 students participated in the study (response rate is 70.01%). The mean total score of Geriatric Knowledge Assessment Scale was 15.6 ± 3.7 (minimum: 2 to maximum: 27). Majority of students (80%) in our study agreed that taking course focused on geriatric care is essential and they are interested to gain further knowledge and training in geriatric care.

Conclusion: The findings showed that the students have an average knowledge in the different areas of the geriatric care. This further reaffirms the need for incorporating the geriatrics education and training into pharmacy curriculum to improve their quality of service in the future.