Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of doctors in Odisha (India) towards informed consent to treatment: A cross sectional study

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Introduction:
The practice of medicine is fundamentally governed by deep-seated moral principles. The long standing "paternalistic approach" has been supplanted by legal recognition and protection of patient's right to autonomy and self-determination. Informed consent serves as defence against coercion, dishonesty, abuse and exploitation. It increases patient's trust on doctor as they actively participate in medical decision-making.

Aims and Objectives:
To assess the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice towards informed consent among the doctors working in Odisha(India) and the factors affecting these.

Material and Methods:
The study was cross-sectional survey. The study population were doctors of Odisha with minimum qualification of MBBS degree and involved in clinical practice. A structured, and pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect data.

Result:
309 subjects were included in the final analysis. More than 70% of participants' either agreed or strongly agreed that lack of awareness among patients was barrier to obtaining informed consent. Lack of self-interest and lack of time were the barriers for obtaining consent was either agreed or strongly agreed by 51.4% and 50.8% respectively. Difficulty in conversing with patients was cited by 47.5% of the participants while lack of encouragement and remuneration was cited by only 17.8% and 19.8% respectively. Mean knowledge score of participants was 10.95 ± 2.16 while mean attitude score was 6.62 ± 1.29. The practice score was high with mean score 4.47 ± 0.75. Based on scoring system 78.3% had good knowledge while 94.2% had good attitude, and 66.3% had good practice regarding informed consent process.

Conclusion:
Higher age of the participants and female gender was significantly associated with the good knowledge. We did not find any statistically significant difference for qualification and experience with knowledge. We did not find any statistically significant difference for age group, gender, qualification, and experience with attitude level. Similarly, we did not find any statistically significant difference for age group, gender, qualification, and experience with practice level. The doctor-patient relationship and the provision of effective care are both regarded as essential components of informed consent. Knowledge and attitude should always coexist in harmony; as knowledge increases, so too will attitudes and practice.