

Perceptions on Awareness, Knowledge and Confidence in Providing Information and Management of Snake-related Injuries by Medical Students in Sarawak, Malaysia

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ABSTRAK

Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) telah mengkategorikan kecederaan berkaitan dengan ular sebagai penyakit tropika terabai yang boleh menyebabkan kecacatan atau kematian jika tidak dirawat dengan segera dan tepat. Pelajar perubatan hanya didedahkan dengan pesakit gigitan ular semasa tahun klinikal dan bergantung kepada lokasi penempatan klinikal. Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk menentukan persepsi kesedaran, pengetahuan dan tahap keyakinan dalam kalangan pelajar perubatan untuk memberikan maklumat dan menguruskan kecederaan disebabkan gigitan ular. Kajian keratan lintang kuantitatif telah dirancang dan data dikumpulkan melalui borang soal selidik menggunakan skala Likert. Persepsi kesedaran, pengetahuan dan tahap keyakinan antara pelajar pra-klinikal dan klinikal diuji dengan menggunakan ujian-t sampel bebas. Nilai $p \leq .05$ diterjemahkan sebagai signifikan secara statistik. Analisa data menunjukkan perbezaan yang signifikan dari segi persepsi pengetahuan ($p = .009$) dan persepsi tahap keyakinan ($p = .025$) dalam kalangan pelajar klinikal dan pra-klinikal. Namun, tiada perbezaan ketara dari segi persepsi kesedaran ($p > .05$). Pelajar klinikal mempunyai persepsi pengetahuan dan tahap keyakinan yang lebih baik daripada pelajar pra-klinikal dalam memberikan maklumat dan menguruskan kecederaan yang berkaitan dengan ular. Kajian yang lebih mendalam harus dilaksanakan dalam kalangan pelajar perubatan di Malaysia. Langkah-langkah penambahbaikan harus dilaksanakan untuk memperkukuh pengetahuan dan tahap keyakinan pelajar

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perubatan dalam mengendalikan kecederaan yang melibatkan ular di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: gigitan ular, kajian keratan rentas, kurikulum perubatan, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The World Health Organization (WHO) has categorised snake-related injuries as a neglected tropical disease which can cause permanent disability, or worse, can lead to death if not treated timely and appropriately. Medical students are exposed to snakebite patients predominantly in their clinical years and depending on the location of their medical postings. This study aimed to determine the perceived awareness, knowledge and confidence level of medical students in providing information and managing snake-related injuries. A quantitative cross-sectional study was designed and the data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire. The perceived awareness, knowledge and confidence level between pre-clinical and clinical students were tested by an independent sample t-test. A p-value of $\leq .05$ was interpreted as statistically significant. Analysis revealed a statistically significant difference of perceived knowledge ($p = .009$) and perception of confidence level ($p = .025$) between clinical and pre-clinical students. However, no difference was found in terms of perceived awareness ($p > .05$). Clinical medical students have a better perception of knowledge and confidence level in providing information and managing snake-related injuries than pre-clinical students. An in-depth study on this topic should be conducted to include all medical students in Malaysia. Steps should be taken to improve the knowledge and confidence level of medical students in managing snake-related injuries in Malaysia.

Keywords: cross-sectional study, Malaysia, medical curriculum, snakebite

INTRODUCTION

Snake-related injury (SRI) declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a neglected public health issue, especially in tropical and subtropical countries (World Health Organisation 2019). WHO reported that 4.5-5.4 million cases of SRIs occur annually worldwide, with fatalities recorded up to 137,880 (World Health Organisation 2019). In Asia, approximately two

million snake envenomation cases occur annually; despite that, SRIs are most likely under-reported in Malaysia (Ismail 2015). Remote Envenomation and Consultancy Services (RECS) aims to provide consultation services for healthcare providers about the management of bites or stings due to envenomation as well as poisoning from naturally occurring toxins (Ismail 2014). SRIs is a medical emergency that may happen in rural and urban