

Assessment of Sunscreen Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices among Nursing Students in Kuwait

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Abstract

Background: Arabian Gulf countries, including Kuwait, have intense sunlight that poses substantial risks to skin health due to harmful UV radiation, leading to skin damage, premature aging, and increased cancer risks. This study assessed sunscreen knowledge, attitudes, and practices among nursing students, who are key agents in promoting health behaviors. Given that Kuwait has a single College of Nursing that attracts students from across the country, the sample represents the broader population.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 446 nursing students (50% male, 50% female) which is the quarter number of all the students from the College of Nursing in Kuwait between July and October 2024.

Results: Gender differences were notable. Females exhibited superior understanding of sunscreen's protective properties, including UVA/UVB coverage (75% vs. 30% for males) and SPF effectiveness (72% vs. 28% for males). Additionally, 41% of females used sunscreen year-round compared to 11% of males, who primarily used it during summer.

Conclusions: Nursing students are pivotal in public health education but exhibit gaps in sunscreen knowledge and practices, with females demonstrating higher awareness than males. Gender-sensitive educational strategies in nursing curricula, alongside public health campaigns, should address misconceptions about sunscreen use and emphasize sun protection. Enhancing nursing students' understanding of sunscreen use equips them to advocate for sun protection practices, potentially reducing skin cancer risk and improving public health outcomes locally and globally.

Keywords

Sunscreen, sun exposure, UV radiation, nursing students, education, public health, dermatology.