

3rd Annual Congress & Medicare Expo on
**PRIMARY HEALTHCARE, CLINICAL &
MEDICAL CASE REPORTS**

April 17-19, 2017 Dubai, UAE

Patient safety culture in primary care in Muscat, Oman

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Background: Patient safety is a universal issue which can affect countries at each stage of health system development. Research regarding patients' safety in primary care concluded that millions of patients globally suffer disabilities, injuries or death annually, due to unsafe medical practice. This has led to the wider recognition of the issue, incorporating of strategic plans in health care organizations and more widespread research in this field. Little has been published about patients' safety in primary care from the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries (GCC) including Oman.

Aims: The aim of this project is to assess the understanding of primary health care staff regarding safety culture and their awareness of safety measures that should be followed during encounters with the patients.

Methods: The study is a cross-sectional survey which assessed the perceptions of patient safety culture among health care professionals working in primary health care in Muscat, Oman, using an existing questionnaire known as Hospital Survey of Patient Safety Culture tool (HSOPSC). The systematic review which was conducted at an earlier identified that this tool was used in many cross cultural samples such as Turkey, Iran and Kuwait to assess safety culture, the same tool has been used to assess the safety culture in the Omani hospitals and it had been used in Kuwait which is one of the GCC countries, with a similar primary health care setting as Oman. By using this tool, we will also be able to compare the patient safety culture in Oman with other countries. The survey was conducted in primary health care centers in Muscat, the capital of Oman. The sample included 22 health centers out of 28 health centers, because they had services which include general practice, nursing care and pharmacy. These services are functional 7 times a week in addition to services such as laboratory, X ray services and dentistry care provided 5 days a week excluding weekends. The target populations were all full time frontline health care professionals working in primary care in Muscat region (Doctors, nurses, pharmacist, radiologist, laboratory technicians). A simple random sampling scheme was used in each primary health care center to select 10% of the outlined staff in each category. Hence, the total number of 207 participated in the survey.

Preliminary Results: One hundred and eighty one (91%) of the participants responded in the study which included 42 doctors (95%), 56 nurses (89%), 19 pharmacists (86%), 22 radiographer (100%), 22 laboratory technicians (100%) and 20 dentist (90%).

Conclusion: The results of this survey will inform policies and process for improving patient safety in primary care in Oman. In addition, the results will enable comparisons within other Eastern Mediterranean Countries, which have used the same tool such as Iran, Kuwait, and Turkey. The study will help to form a possible template for building of a safety culture in primary health care in the context of a rapid economic development.

Biography

Muna AL Lawati is working as the Head of Quality and Safety for Primary Health Care at Directorate General for Muscat Region, Ministry of Health. Currently, she is pursuing her PhD in Patient Safety at the University of Sydney, Australia.

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