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ABSTRACT

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Palestinian School Teachers about Epilepsy: A Cross-sectional Study

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Background: Epilepsy is a common chronic neurological condition among children, often presenting significant challenges in academic, social, and emotional domains. Although evidence indicates a lack of their knowledge and preparedness, school teachers are essential in ensuring the safety and inclusion of students with epilepsy. Inadequate knowledge and readiness to deal with epilepsy might result in stigma, inefficient behaviors, or a lost chance to provide necessary first aid during a seizure.

Objectives: This study aims to assess Palestinian school teachers' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes regarding epilepsy, and identify gaps to provide insights for the next educational initiatives and policy improvements

Methods: Cross-sectional quantitative research was employed. The study included both primary and secondary school teachers from all areas in the West Bank who completed an online, self-administered questionnaire between October and December 2024.

Data was analyzed using SPSS software (version 26). Chi-square tests and one-way ANOVA were used to determine associations between demographic variables and knowledge or attitudes, or practices regarding epilepsy. $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

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Results: Three hundred ninety-seven valid questionnaires were analyzed. Female teachers showed significantly better knowledge than male teachers ($p = 0.031$). Participants carrying a higher education degree and working as social guides had significantly the best knowledge, as $p = 0.008, 0.005$, respectively. Teachers living in Nablus governorate had the best knowledge ($p = 0.003$), and those living in Jenin had the best attitudes ($p = 0.026$) towards epilepsy. Finally, teachers working in primary schools had the best practices ($p = 0.038$).

Conclusion: Results demonstrate gaps in knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to epilepsy. The study highlights the need for comprehensive training programs aimed at equipping school teachers with first aid skills for managing unexpected epileptic seizures, thereby enhancing the quality of life for students with epilepsy within the school environment.