

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

## Patients' Attitudes Toward Care by Male Nurses in a Tertiary Care Center in Mangalore

## De las actitudes de los pacientes hacia los cuidados prestados por sus enfermeros en un centro de atención terciaria de Mangalor

**Jooli Mathew.** Father Muller College of Nursing, Kankanady, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.  
Email: [joolym1991@gmail.com](mailto:joolym1991@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3346-5283>

**Selinamma Devasia.** Father Muller College of Nursing, Kankanady, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.  
Email: [devasiasrdhanya@fathermuller.in](mailto:devasiasrdhanya@fathermuller.in), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0683-4869>

**Simy P.U.** Father Muller College of Nursing, Kankanady, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.  
Email: [simyputhen@gmail.com](mailto:simyputhen@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-7097-9686>

**Mamatha M.** Father Muller College of Nursing, Kankanady, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.  
Email: [mamathaur@gmail.com](mailto:mamathaur@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9190-4712>

**Mamadevi.** Father Muller College of Nursing, Kankanady, Mangalore, Karnataka, India  
Email [mamathajagali@gmail.com](mailto:mamathajagali@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1558-5148>

**Alna Augustine.** Father Muller College of Nursing, Kankanady, Mangalore, Karnataka, India.  
Email: [alnaphilomina@gmail.com](mailto:alnaphilomina@gmail.com), <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4320-9426>

**Received:** March 13, 2025

**Accepted:** Mayo 8, 2025

**Conflicts of interest:** None.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.71164/socialmedicine.v19i1.2026.2001>

### Abstract

**Background.** Nursing is a profession that combines technical expertise with empathy to alleviate suffering and promote well-being. Although the number of male nurses has been increasing, the field is still widely regarded as female-dominated, a perception rooted in historical influences dating back to Florence Nightingale. This study examines patients' attitudes toward receiving care from male nurses. **Methods.** descriptive quantitative design was adopted. The sample comprised 234 patients (male and female) who had received care from male nurses at a tertiary care center in Mangalore. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that included baseline variables and an attitude rating scale. **Results.** Among the 234 patients surveyed, 114 (48.7%) reported a positive attitude, 116 (49.6%) a neutral attitude, and 4 (1.7%) a negative attitude toward male nurses. Overall, nearly half of the patients expressed a positive view of receiving care from male nurses. No significant associations were found between baseline variables and patients' attitudes. **Conclusion.** Only a small proportion of patients (1.7%) held a negative view of male nurses. Most patients expressed either positive or neutral attitudes, indicating that societal perceptions of male nurses are largely favorable.

**Keywords:** Patient attitudes; Male nurses; Nursing care

### Resumen

**Antecedentes.** La enfermería es una profesión que combina conocimientos técnicos con una actitud de empatía para aliviar el sufrimiento ajeno y promover el bienestar. Aunque el número de enfermeros ha ido en aumento, todavía se considera que en este campo predominan las mujeres, una percepción arraigada en influencias históricas que se remontan a Florence Nightingale. En este estudio se examinan las actitudes de los pacientes hacia los cuidados prestados por sus enfermeros. **Métodos.** Se adoptó un diseño cuantitativo descriptivo. La muestra estuvo formada por 234 pacientes (hombres y mujeres) que habían recibido cuidados de enfermeros varones en un centro de atención terciaria de Mangalore. Los datos se recogieron mediante un cuestionario estructurado que incluía variables de referencia y una escala de valoración de actitudes. **Resultados.** De los 234 pacientes encuestados, 114 (48.7%) manifestaron una actitud positiva, 116 (49.6%) una actitud neutra y 4 (1.7%) una actitud negativa hacia los enfermeros. En general, casi la mitad de los pacientes expresaron una opinión positiva de recibir cuidados de enfermeros. No se encontraron asociaciones significativas entre las variables basales y las actitudes de los pacientes. **Conclusiones.** Sólo una pequeña proporción de pacientes (1.7%) tuvieron una opinión negativa sobre los enfermeros. La mayoría de los pacientes expresaron actitudes positivas o neutras, lo que indica que las percepciones sociales de los enfermeros son en gran medida favorables.

**Palabras clave:** Actitudes de los pacientes; Enfermeros; Cuidados de enfermería



## Introduction.

Nursing has traditionally been a female-dominated profession, with nurses known for their compassion, tenderness, and motherly affection.<sup>1</sup> Nurses play a vital role in healthcare by attending patients, promoting health, preventing illness, relieving suffering, and supporting a peaceful death, regardless of a patient's background.<sup>2</sup> While more men are entering the nursing profession, societal and cultural barriers persist, largely due to the feminine image attached to nursing, which dates back to Florence Nightingale.<sup>3</sup>

Cultural myths and gender stereotypes discourage men from pursuing nursing careers, and the profession's nurturing qualities are often seen as feminine.<sup>4,5,6</sup> However, recent years have seen an increase in male nurses, likely due to expanded job opportunities and attractive salaries.<sup>7,8</sup> Despite this shift, society is still hesitant to fully accept male nurses, and there is a lack of research on public attitudes toward them. Some patients express reservations about being cared for by male nurses, while others have positive experiences, finding them caring and competent.<sup>9</sup> This study aims to explore patients' perceptions of male nurses, providing valuable insights into how these perceptions influence patient care and outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

The findings from this research can serve as a valuable tool in addressing gender barriers and discrimination in the nursing field. Ultimately, this study aims to promote the understanding that nursing care can be provided by professionals of any gender, free from prejudice or bias.<sup>11</sup> Many nursing institutions admit a limited number of boys to nursing programs, and the seat allocation for male and female students varies significantly. This study could also serve as an eye-opener, highlighting the need to offer more seats for male students in nursing courses.

## Research Methodology

### Study design, setting and sample.

A descriptive quantitative design was employed in this study to provide a comprehensive understanding of patients' attitudes.<sup>12</sup> The study

was conducted at Father Muller Medical College Hospital in Mangalore, a multi-specialty, National Accreditation Board for Hospitals (NABH) accredited institution with a capacity of 1,250 beds. The hospital is supported by a diverse team of over 1,200 nursing personnel across various categories, including 950 female nurses and 250 male nurses. The sample for the study consisted of 234 patients, both male and female, who had been admitted to the hospital and had received nursing care from male nurses. These patients were selected based on their willingness to participate and their experience with male nursing staff, ensuring a representative perspective of the patient population. The sample size was calculated based on a previously published study.<sup>13</sup>

## Data Collection Tools, Techniques, and Process

Two instruments were used for data collection. The first was a baseline proforma (Content Validity Index = 0.82) comprising 11 items on demographic and health information such as age, gender, education, occupation, and medical history. The second was a structured attitude rating scale, developed by the investigators and validated by seven experts (Content Validity Index = 0.85). This scale included 20 statements assessing patients' perceptions of male nurses: 14 positive and 6 negative. Responses were scored as follows: *Agree* (3), *Neutral* (2), *Disagree* (1), with reverse scoring for negative items. The maximum possible score was 60, categorized as >45 (>75%) positive, 30–45 (50–75%) neutral, and <30 (<50%) negative.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee, and formal permission was secured from the hospital administration. The investigator introduced herself to participants, explained the study's purpose and procedures, and obtained informed consent. Data collection occurred from June 20 to July 27, 2024, using simple random sampling. Ten wards where male nurses provided care were identified, and from each, 10–15% of patients were randomly selected. In total, 234 patients participated. Questionnaires required approximately 10–15 minutes to complete, and responses were kept confidential. Data were then compiled for analysis.

**Table-1: Distribution of Subjects According to Baseline Variables, n-234**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	153	65.4
Female	81	34.6
<b>Education Level</b>		
Primary	96	41.0
Secondary/Higher Secondary	85	36.3
Graduate and Above	53	22.6
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
Urban	94	40.2
Rural	125	53.4
Semi-Urban	15	6.4
<b>Occupation</b>		
Government Employee	7	3.0
Private Employee	51	21.8
Self-Employed	111	47.4
Unemployed	35	15.0
Retired	30	12.8
<b>Family Member in Nursing</b>		
Yes	36	15.4
No	198	84.6
<b>Gender of Family Member in Nursing</b>		
None	198	84.6
Male	4	1.7
Female	32	13.7

## Results

Data were entered into a master sheet and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings are presented in three sections: baseline variables (Table 1), levels of patient attitudes toward male nurses (Table 2), and associations between attitudes and baseline variables (Table 3).

Most respondents were aged 55–64 years (25.2%), followed by 25–34 years and 45–54 years (17.9% each). Smaller proportions were in the 15–24 and 75–84 year groups, indicating a predominance of middle-aged to early older adults. The majority were married (87.2%), while 12.8% were unmarried. By type of medical case, 45.3% were medical, 36.8% surgical, 14.5% oncology, and 3.4% gynecology. Nearly half (49.5%) had a previous history of hospitalization. Among those with prior hospitalizations, most had been admitted once (15.8%) or twice (17.6%).

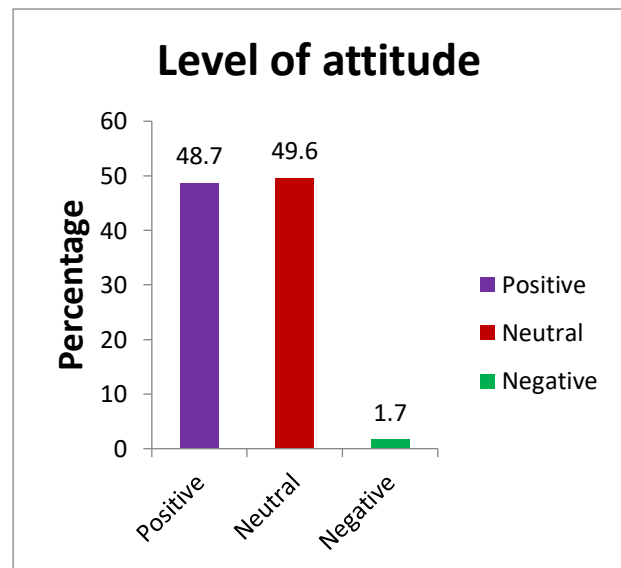
Regarding attitudes toward male nurses, 48.7% scored in the positive range (>45), 49.6% in the neutral range (30–45), and only 1.7% in the negative range (<30). Analysis of associations between patient attitudes and baseline variables showed no significant relationships (all p-values > 0.05), and the null hypothesis was retained.

**Table-2 Level of attitude of patients towards being cared for by male nurses.**

**N=234**

Level of attitude	Scoring	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Positive	>45	114	48.7
Neutral	30-45	116	49.6
Negative	<30	4	1.7

Maximum possible score=60



**Table3: Association between attitude and baseline variables.**

This table shows the association between attitude and selected baseline variables of patients being cared for by male nurses.

VARIABLES	CHI-SQUARE	df	P value
Age	5.050	6	.537
Gender	.458	1	.499
Education	.069	2	.966
Place of residence	.518	2	.772
Occupation	4.574	4	.334
Family member in nursing	.281	1	.596
Gender of the family member in nursing	-	-	.640
Marital status	.023	1	.880
Type of sickness	-	-	.369
Previous history of hospitalization	-	-	.334
Frequency of hospitalization	-	-	.857

All the p-values are above 0.05, indicating no significant association, so null hypothesis retained.

### Discussion

Gender diversity in nursing is essential for fostering a positive and inclusive environment within healthcare settings.<sup>14</sup> Although more young men have entered the nursing profession in recent years, societal acceptance of male nurses remains hesitant. Patient satisfaction with nursing care is critical for recovery, as patients seek respect, timely responses, and attentiveness to their concerns.<sup>15</sup> The current study explores patient

attitudes, finding that 48.7% of participants had a positive attitude, 49.6% held a neutral attitude, and just 1.7% had a negative perception of male nurses. These findings align with similar studies, including one from Uttarakhand,<sup>13</sup> where 67.5% of participants had a neutral perception of male nurses, but in that study, only 13.2% had a positive view. Another study in Alexandria<sup>16</sup> showed that while 37.7% of respondents held a negative view of male nurses, 62.3% expressed positivity about the care they provided.

Despite these insights, the current study did not find a significant association between patients' attitudes toward male nurses and baseline variables such as age, gender, education, marital status, occupation, or type of sickness. This contrasts with studies in Uttarakhand<sup>13</sup> and Alexandria,<sup>16</sup> where specific factors like education and age were found to influence perceptions of male nurses. The lack of significant association in this study suggests that patient attitudes may be shaped by broader cultural and societal factors rather than individual demographic characteristics. These findings emphasize the need for continued efforts to increase gender diversity and acceptance in nursing.

**Limitation:** This study was limited to patients admitted to a selected hospital in Mangalore.

**Recommendations:** Future research should involve larger sample sizes to enhance the generalizability of findings. Studies should also explore the experiences and challenges of male nurses. Additionally, healthcare providers should focus on addressing gender stereotypes and promoting gender equality in the nursing profession.

### Conclusion

Although nursing has traditionally been viewed as a female profession, the number of male nurses is steadily increasing.<sup>17</sup> Assessing patient attitudes toward male nurses is therefore important for promoting gender diversity and inclusivity in healthcare. This study indicates that most patients were comfortable receiving care from male nurses,

with nearly half reporting positive attitudes. These findings underscore the need to recognize and accommodate patient preferences while fostering an equitable nursing workforce.

## References

1. Mączyński D, Pawlak N, Pasek M, Wardak A, Serafin L, Czarkowska-Pączek B. Challenging Stereotypes: Examining Patients' Attitudes Towards Male Nurses – mixed methods systematic review [Internet]. Research Square. 2023. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-3370592/v1>.
2. Varghese VJA. Nursing foundations. 3rd ed. Hyderabad: Frontline Publications; 2023.
3. Budu HI, Abalo EM, Bam VB, Agyemang DO, Noi S, editors. "I prefer a male nurse to a female nurse": patients' preference for and satisfaction with nursing care provided by male nurses at the KomfoAnokye Teaching Hospital. *BMC Nurs*. 2019;18.
4. Christina Foss. Gender bias in nursing care? Gender-related differences in patient satisfaction with the quality of nursing care [Internet]. [cited 2024 Nov 12]. Available from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1046/j.1471-6712.2002.00045.x>
5. Sundus A, Younas A. Caring behaviors of male nurses: a descriptive qualitative study of patients' perspectives. *Nursing Forum* [Internet]. 2020;55(4):575–81. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/nuf.1246>.
6. Raut ERWFCB. Male nurses' work performance: a cross-sectional study. *Medicine* [Internet]. 2022 Aug 5;101(31) Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1097/md.0000000000002>.
7. Bwalya P, Kolala P, Mazyopa E, Mofya K. Perceptions: beliefs and attitudes of expectant women towards male midwives conducting deliveries in health institutions in Zambia. *Int Res J Public Health Educ*. 2015 Apr;2(4):43–48. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.15739/irjpeh.018>.
8. Ahmad MM, Alasad JA. Patients' preferences for nurses' gender in Jordan. *Int J Nurs Pract* [Internet]. 2007;13(4):237–42. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-172X.2007.00633.x>.
9. Kellett P. The contextual performance of masculinity and caring by men nurses: an exploration of men's caring within a profession numerically dominated by women [Internet]. Unpublished; 2010. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/2.1.5033.7928>.
10. Wilson G. The experience of males entering nursing: a phenomenological analysis of professionally enhancing factors and barriers. *Contemp Nurse* [Internet]. 2005;20(2):221–33. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5172/conu.20.2.221>.
11. Zhou Y, Weng L, Wang M, Huang G. Male nursing students' experiences of their clinical internships: A qualitative study. *Heliyon* [Internet]. 2024;10(10):e31075. Disponible en: <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S2405844024071068>
12. Sharma SK. Nursing research and statistics. New Delhi: REL India Pvt Ltd; 2014.
13. Sharma SK, Mudgal BK, et al. Patient perception towards males in the nursing profession in India: a single-center, cross-sectional survey. *Int J Africa Nurs Sci*. 2022; 16:1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijans.2022.100417>
14. Adelanwa AO, Gooden BA, Dawkins P, Lindo JLM. Attitudes of patients towards being cared for by male nurses in a Jamaican hospital. *Appl Nurs Res*. 2016; 29:140–3. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2015.06.015>.
15. Ella RE, Samsom-Akpan PE, Lukpata FE, Lukpata HO, Ella F. Perception of adults towards men in nursing in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Adv Soc Sci Res J* [Internet]. 2018;5(4):199-211. Available from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14738/assrj.54.4449>.
16. Abdel-Fattah SA, Samuel VM, Mohamed HE. Patients' perception of care provided by male nurses in Alexandria Governorate. *Novelty Journals*. 2019; 6:1818–32. Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com).
17. Adu-Gyamfi L, Tsey P, J. P. R, editors. Patients' satisfaction with male nurses: evidence from a teaching hospital in Ghana. 2021; 13:72–87. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.62868/pbj.v13i2.163>.
18. Rashad SUR, Bibi A, Ahmad A, Ahmed T, Arshad Z, Ali Y, Ahamd H, Khaliq F, Mehboob Ali F. Exploring patient satisfaction with nursing care and its association with gender at a tertiary care hospital in Karachi. *Pak J Health Sci*. 2023;4(6):150–4. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.54393/pjhs.v4i06.859>.



**Social Medicine**

Health For All

ISSN: 1557-7112