Nursing Audit can help to determine if the organisation complies with the defined quality system and can involve procedural or results-based assessment criteria. Audit may cause certain kind of psychological stress as well as disturbance in the routine activities of the working area. Hence it is important to know how an audit process will be perceived by the Staff. Staff nurses may have a better idea regarding the process of the audit, its timing, schedule, problems faced etc. Hence better ideas can be suggested based on the experience of the staff nurses. A study conducted by Lord & Little Johns (1996) on the impact of hospital and community-based clinical audit programme revealed that the majority of respondents were positive about the clinical audit in their organisations.

**Objectives**

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify perception of the staff nurses regarding quality audit process, and
2. Find the association between the perception of the staff nurses regarding audit process and selected demographic variables.

**Methodology**

The study adapted descriptive survey approach and explorative survey design. The sample consisted of 255 staff nurses from KMC Hospital Attavar and KMC Hospital in Mangalore district, Karnataka. A purposive sampling technique was selected for this study as it was more suitable for the study.

The key variable of the study was Perception of the audit process and selected variables were Age, Gender, Experience, Area of work, Source of information on audit, Number of times audit was undertaken and Designation.

The tools included in the study were: demographic proforma to collect the data, audit scale (arbitrarily classified as unfavourable and favourable perception) to evaluate the impact of hospital and community-based clinical audit programme. It was shown that in selected hospitals, staff nurses had positive perception about the audit process; they also reported improvement in their levels of knowledge, skill and patient care though frequent audit hindered them in discharge of their duties.
Sample characteristics
The sample included in the study were 255 staff nurses.
- Majority of the staff nurses 134(52.5%) belonged to the age group 20-30 years.
- Majority of the staff nurses (n=230, 90.2%) were females.
- Majority of the staff nurses i.e. 211 (82.7%) had educational level of GNM.
- More than half of the staff nurses (n=154, 60.4%) were working in general ward.
- Majority of staff nurses (n=113, 44.3%) had 1-5 years of experience.
- More than half of the staff nurses (n=134, 52.5%) had attended the information classes on auditing.

Perception of staff nurses on audit process
Most of the staff nurses i.e. 248 (97.3%) perceived the audit process favourably.

Association between perception of the audit process and demographic variable
This study shows that there is a significant association between perception of staff nurses and variables like age, education, area of work, gender, previous exposure to audit process and number of times auditing was undertaken.

Open-ended questionnaire
In an open-ended questionnaire staff nurses reported many favourable factors of the audit process: audit process improved the ward arrangement, as also their level of knowledge, skill and patient care. Unfavourable factors were: audit process was time consuming, stressful and too many questioning to the junior staffs.

Suggestions to improve the audit process as expressed by the staff nurses were: auditors need to maintain timing and avoid making staff to wait for too long, frequency of the audit need to be limited, post-audit information or modification need to be communicated well.

Recommendations
On the basis of the study findings, the following recommendations were made:
- The study can be replicated on a larger sample.
- A comparative study can be done to determine the perception of the staff nurses and auditors on Quality Audit Process.
- A Planned teaching programme can be conducted regarding quality audit process to the auditors in order to improve their work approach.

Implications
The nursing audit helps in improving the skill and expanding the knowledge of nurses. Through this nurses need to provide a better care for the patient. Education regarding audit helps in changing the perception of staff nurses on quality audit process.

It also helps in systematic process of documentation, thereby helping in better arrangement of the ward. The nurse administrator should be enthusiastic and formulate policies to educate the staff nurses regarding quality audit process. Nurses should be involved in conducting information classes regarding quality audit process to improve the perception of staff nurses towards the audit.

Conclusion
The present study conducted in selected hospitals of Karnataka revealed that overall the staff nurses had positive perception regarding quality audit process. Staff nurses reported that their level of knowledge, skill and patient care improved due to timely audit. At the same time, they also reported that frequent auditing and stress were the key hindering factors in audit process.

References