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KNOWLEDGE OF HIV/AIDS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS IN KARNATAKA

Devindrappa Mahadevappa¹ and S. L. Hiremath²

¹Research Scholar, Dept. Of Sociology, Gulbarga University, Gulbaraga (Karnataka State)

²Professor & Chairman Dept. Of Sociology, Gulbarga University, Gulbarga .

Abstract:- Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) was first diagnosed in the United States (US) in 1981; over 90% of all infected cases occur in developing countries and the number of cases is increasing every year. AIDS can provoke irrational emotions and fears in health care and had called for a national response in terms of both HIV prevention and care. There was a violent ten-year conflict in Nepal. The authors of a recent article state that the violent conflict may have fuelled the HIV/AIDS epidemic in India. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic knocks number of countries' In India, several thousand HIV-infected babies are expected to be born every year (Rahbar et al., 2007). The rising prevalence of HIV among pregnant women in rural India is of great concern (Rogers et al., 2006). India is now in the grip of so-called type pattern of AIDS epidemic which shifts from high risk group to the bridge population (clients of sex workers, STD patients) and then to general population, as a whole (Govt. of India, 1999). HIV the disease, whose mode of transmission is known and is largely preventable, but due to lack of knowledge and practices about HIV/AIDS in general population makes it rapid spread in the country. Widespread ignorance, poor information and misconceptions about the disease in society are responsible to cause in social stigma and discrimination and stigmatization (Meena et al., 2013).

Keywords: Medical Students , Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) , poor information and misconceptions .

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization's report on the role of HIV-related medical education in the South Asia region has also underscored the importance of including training in sensitivity, communication skills, and the development of compassionate attitudes toward HIV infected patients in the medical curricula . Studies in India concerning HIV-related knowledge and attitudes amongst both health professionals and medical students suggest that early educational intervention has the potential to address the gaps both in knowledge and the negative attitudes directed towards those with HIV infection. But, only few studies are available with respect to awareness and AIDS among medical undergraduates in our countries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the perceptions and knowledge of medical students regarding HIV/AIDS
2. To study the awareness of HIV/AIDS among medical students

MATERIAL AND METHODS :

In this present cross-sectional study, the newly admitted students of the Medical College were enrolled as study subjects. The students were of first semester of three consecutive year's i.e., of In every year 100 students were

admitted in the first year. The students not present on the day of data collection were excluded from the study. Therefore, the total numbers of students enrolled in the study were 257 the study is conducted in karnataka state. Data collection was done on a fix day in the first week of the first semester of each year.

RESULTS :

All the students who were present on the day of data collection were included in our study and have completed the questionnaire. The mean age of the study population was 18.5 (range 17 – 21 years). In our study, it was observed that all the students have heard the name of HIV/AIDS and they have correct knowledge of the causative agent i.e; disease is caused by a virus name Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

Awareness among first year medical students

Data pertaining to awareness about HIV/AIDS among first year medical students indicate that more than three fourth of the respondents have awareness regarding HIV/AIDS nearly half of the respondents that is 43 percent of them have knowledge about anti-retroviral drugs which are effectively used against progression of infection inside the body. More than two third of them that is 88 percent of the respondents have correct knowledge about unavailability of vaccines to prevent or cure the infection.

Awareness regarding mode of transmission

nearly 100 that is 98 percent of the respondents have awareness regarding modes of HIV/AIDS transmission. Detailed analysis of the data on different mode of transmission of the HIV/AIDS indicates that 98 percent of them are aware about sexual route that is unsafe sexual practice. About 90 percent of them indicated their awareness about the mode of transmission as through infected blood, and 78 percent of the respondents indicate their awareness about the mode of transmission as mother to child transmission. Finally 89 percent of the respondents indicate about mode of transmission as through sharing of needles/syringes. It is significant to note that the respondents are medical first year.

Misconceptions among first year medical students regarding modes of Transmission

Misconceptions related to the transmission of infection were also prevailing among these students. Various routes of transmission. Students about (39%) were also answered that the infection was transmitted by sharing of cloths that is (75%) and food or utensils (86%). Similarly, they were also agreed that kissing and shaking hands (89%) was among the students (39%) were also answered that infection can be Insect Bites

Awareness among first year medical students regarding Preventive Approaches

In our study, it was found that the majority of these newly admitted medical undergraduates had correct knowledge about the methods of prevention All the students were agreed that avoidance of multiple sex partners (unprotected sex) was the most important approach for prevention of infection and about 92% of them also had correct knowledge about use of condoms during sexual activities. About 91% of these students were aware about safe use of screened blood and its products. More than three – fourth of the students (82.88%) were also correctly in view of use of disposable syringes and needles in various health care activities as important preventive methods against spread of infection.

DISCUSSION:

People living with HIV in India often experience discrimination while receiving health care. Inadequate knowledge and fear of HIV infected people have been identified as a serious problem among health care professionals considering themselves to be at risk of contracting the infection in India. These feelings of anxiety and fear concerning HIV infected people among Indian health care professional's results in their meting out derogatory behaviour towards their HIV infected patients. Research in other countries has indicated the central role of medical education in improving knowledge of HIV risk and transmission and changing the attitudes of medical students as it is related to care of HIV-infected people .

The only way to combat a disease that has no effective treatment is by prevention. The best single way to prevent this disease is through education. Prevention of HIV/AIDS infection through continuing education is a key strategy for the control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic at least until vaccines and drugs are available, accessible, and affordable to all the infected persons.

The results of our study focused on the critical knowledge regarding the spread and risk of transmission among the newly admitted medical undergraduates. Though the all students in our study heard about the HIV/AIDS and its causative agent, still their knowledge about availability of drugs and vaccines were satisfactory. Results of our study regarding to the knowledge of the students (96%) about incurability was in conformity with the observations, which is better than the knowledge among the first year nursing students (68%) . However, the knowledge about availability of diagnostic methods in our study was poor than the medical students the other countries, but better than the nursing students in our countries Lack of knowledge regarding the HIV infection among the students in this study is also suggested by our data pertaining to vaccine and drug availability for HIV prevention. Twelve percent (12%) and 43% of the students reported availability of a vaccine to prevent HIV and drug for halting the progression of infection in the body. The similar results were also observed in the study. In a study conducted among nursing students in India, they found that 10% of nursing students reported vaccine availability to prevent HIV . Similar responses were also observed in nursing students in india.

It is encouraging to note that the knowledge about transmission of infection through the in discriminant heterosexual behavior, by blood or its product and by use of contaminated needle/syringes were fairly high (87-98%) in our study subjects. However, only 78% of them had knowledge about vertical route of transmission. Similar high figures of knowledge about the transmission were reported from studies conducted on various populations in our country and abroad . Similar other studies certain misconceptions about transmission of HIV/AIDS were also prevalent in our study. Commonest misconceptions m prevailed among them were transmission through casual contacts like sitting together or sharing clothes, utensils/foods and shaking hands and kissing. In our study, there was an important misconception about transmission of infection by insect bite which was shown in other studies . These misconceptions may reduce their efficiencies in providing care to affected groups in the community. These misconceptions need to be allayed during their medical teaching and trainings. Similar to the other studies , most of the students in our study had awareness related to the different preventive approaches.

CONCLUSION :

This study is pertinent in the group of respondents, medical undergraduates in the basic medical sciences, who have little or no contact with patients yet, to view their knowledge towards the global fight against the spread of HIV. Findings of this study suggest that the students had satisfactory levels of knowledge on transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS. It recommended from these data that the need for development and organization of HIV/AIDS training sessions at regular intervals from high school level to inception of medical curriculum. This will promote a good delivery of accurate information on HIV/AIDS to the public and health care personnel to provide proper patient care.

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