

Assessment of the knowledge and attitude on HIV/AIDS among patients in tertiary care hospital

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Abstract

Introduction: AIDS is the final life threatening stage of HIV/AIDS, a pandemic that has spread to the whole world. The attitude of the general public towards people with HIV/AIDS is mostly negative. **Objectives:** To identify the knowledge and attitude among patients attending skin OPD. **Methods:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted between to assess the knowledge and attitude of patients on HIV/AIDS attending skin OPD in Chennai district. 143 patients attending OPD during study period were selected. Data were obtained using the structured and semi-structured questionnaire through interview technique. Verbal consent was taken before collecting data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. **Results:** Majority (65.73%) of the sources of the information were television followed by radio (56.64%). The majority of respondents belong to age group 31-40 years (37.76%) with female dominance (52.45%). The Knowledge on transmission of HIV/ AIDS among respondents was from about 35 to 72 percent. The attitudes on HIV/ AIDS and behavior mean score was 4.11±0.538. **Conclusion:** Hence, we conclude that awareness on HIV/ AIDS for common people should be pursued.

Keywords: AIDS, attitude, HIV, knowledge.

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INTRODUCTION

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a virus that slowly destroys the body's Immune System. The HIV is the causative agent of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and is not destroyed by antibiotics. AIDS is the final life threatening stage of HIV/AIDS, a pandemic that has spread to the whole world.¹ From its first appearance in 1980 in San Francisco, USA, HIV/AIDS has constituted one of the most difficult challenges for the health care profession and it has been declared the worst disaster to befall mankind in recorded human history.² The disease has continued to spread at the rate of more than 10,000 new cases per day despite

significant efforts made to contain its spread.³ Out of the people infected with the virus, over 21 million have died from the disease worldwide.^{4,5} Everyday there are more than 16,000 new cases, with 12,000 of these occurring in people aged 15-49 years, while 50% of them fall into age group 15-24 years. With the increasing number of people living with HIV/AIDS, control and preventive strategies must not only continue to encourage behavioral modifications by all, but should also highlight the need to respect the rights to care of the increasing number of people with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs). In addition, there should be full integration of these persons within the context of their families and the society at large, in the most appropriate ways that would allow them to continue to live productive lives socially and economically.⁶ The attitude of the general public towards people with HIV/AIDS is mostly negative.^{7,8} Well-coordinated continuing education on HIV/AIDS for all categories of health-care workers is recommended as a vital strategy in the crusade against the epidemic. The fear of being infected at workplaces, educational institutions and in the community has led to irrational and discriminatory treatment of people living with HIV/AIDS. Their rights to employment, housing, education and even health and nursing care are being violated because of their HIV

status. Hence, the need to examine knowledge and attitude of people towards HIV/AIDS in our health care facilities.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A cross-sectional survey was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude people attending skin OPD. The target population of the study was people residing at RIMS Medical College, Ongole district attending skin OPD. One hundred and forty three people above age 18 years. were interviewed during study period. The questionnaires were filled and edited for accurate, complete and errors free. The questionnaire having three

sections: socio-demographic information, knowledge on HIV/ AIDS and attitude on HIV/ AIDS was used. The questionnaire was prepared after an extensive literature search. Data were collected using interview method by data collectors. Permission from institutional ethical committee was taken before implementing the survey. The attitudes on HIV/ AIDS and behavior, a five scale raring scale from strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree with weight from 5 to 1 was implemented to assess. Verbal consent for each respondent was taken before collecting data. After categorization and entry, analysis was done in SPSS software version.

RESULTS

Table 1: Sources of information on HIV/AIDS among respondents

Source of Information	Frequency (n=143)*	Percentage
Friend	47	32.87
Radio	81	56.64
Television	94	65.73
Poster	24	16.78
Newspaper	21	14.68
Family members/Relatives	17	11.89

(* Multiple response Present)

The respondents had heard of HIV/ AIDS. Majority (65.73%) the source of the information was television followed by radio (56.64%).

Table 2: Demographic profile of Respondents

Variable	Frequency (n=143)	Percentage	
Age group (years)	>18-20	12	8.39
	21-30	39	27.28
	31-40	54	37.76
	>40	38	26.57
Sex	Male	68	47.55
	Female	75	52.45
Education	Illiterate	08	5.59
	primary	28	19.58
	Secondary	78	54.55
	Graduate and PG	29	20.28
	I and II	42	29.37
Socioeconomic status	III	63	44.06
	IV and V	38	26.57

The majority of respondents belong to age group 31-40 years (37.76%) with female dominance (52.45%). The respondents were belong majority to class III socioeconomic status (44.06%) and 54.55% were educated up to secondary schooling.

Table 3: Knowledge on HIV/ AIDS

Symptoms of Symptoms of AIDS	Frequency (n=143)*	Percent
Chronic Diarrhea for more than 1 month	44	30.77
Loss of body weight	67	46.85
Long term fever and common cold	52	36.36
Vesicles or warts around mouth	21	14.68
Rashes in the skin	24	16.78
Transmission of HIV/ AIDS		
From affected mother to baby	69	48.25

From affected person's blood	67	46.85
From infected needles	58	40.56
Person's with multiple sexual partners	91	63.64
Baby delivered from the affected mother	54	37.76
From needle users among drug addicts	51	35.66
Through sexual intercourse	104	72.73
Modes of prevention of HIV/ AIDS		
Having single sexual partner	75	52.45
Use of condoms during sexual intercourse	58	40.56
Early treatment of STDs	52	36.36
Use of sterilized needle	38	26.57

The Knowledge on transmission of HIV/ AIDS among respondents was from about 35 to 72 percent and the knowledge on the mode of transmission of STIs and HIV/ AIDS from about 26 to 52 percent.

Table 4: Attitude and behavior on HIV/ AIDS (n = 248)

Practice on HIV/ AIDS	Mean \pm SD
HIV/AIDS is caused due to the curse of God	4.40 \pm 0.82
Support is required for people affected with HIV/AIDS	4.33 \pm 0.77
Affected person should be isolated	4.10 \pm 0.86
Husband and wife should talk openly about HIV/AIDS	4.24 \pm 0.75
Should tell other people if one of your family member is affected from HIV/AIDS	4.13 \pm 0.81
If any employee is suffering from HIV/AIDS then he/she should be fired from the job	4.35 \pm 0.93
A child with HIV/AIDS should be abandoned from school/ college	4.23 \pm 1.01
Affected person should get treatment	4.15 \pm 0.95
One should not be involved in community programmes of affected with HIV/AIDS	3.96 \pm 0.06
HIV/AIDS is only transmitted to people having unsafe sex.	3.30 \pm 1.06
Person who looks healthy is not affected by HIV/AIDS	3.60 \pm 1.03
Hating people affected with HIV/AIDS should be stopped	4.25 \pm 1.00
People suffered with HIV/AIDS should be treated well.	4.46 \pm 0.73

The mean values of questions including HIV/AIDS is caused due to the curse of God (4.40 \pm 0.82), if any employee is suffering from HIV/AIDS then he/she should be fired from the job (4.35 \pm 0.93), a child with HIV/AIDS should be abandoned from school/college (4.23 \pm 1.01), affected person should get treatment (4.15 \pm 0.95), one should not be involved in community programmes if affected with HIV/AIDS (3.96 \pm 0.06), HIV/AIDS is only transmitted to people having unsafe sex (3.30 \pm 1.06).

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude on HIV/AIDS among people attending skin OPD. Among 143 respondents, majority (65.73%) the source of the information was television followed by radio (56.64%). The majority of respondents belong to age group 31-40 years (37.76%) with female dominance (52.45%). The respondents were belong majority to class III socioeconomic status (44.06%) and 54.55% were educated up to secondary schooling. Similar findings related to demographic profile was seen in study done by Prajapati L. M. *et al.*⁹ The knowledge regarding symptoms of HIV/ AIDS, 46.85% answered the loss of body weight, 36.36% responded long term fever and common cold, 30.77% thought chronic diarrhea for more than a month. The findings of the present study was in

accordance with study done by Singh S.K. *et al.*¹⁰ In relation to the knowledge on the transmission of HIV/ AIDS, 72.73% reflected sexual intercourse while 48.2% indicated from affected mother to baby, that was similar to the study done by Singh S.K. *et al.*¹⁰ where 82.78% of respondents responded that the sexual intercourse in the most common mode of transmission of HIV/ AIDS. The contrast findings was seen in a study done in Ethiopia which revealed that the perception of the mode of transmission were sexual intercourse 98.7%, using unsterile needles and blades 34.1%, blood transfusion 11.7%, breathing 1.6% and eating together 0.6%.¹¹ The mode of prevention of HIV/ AIDS, 52.45% answered as having single sexual partner while 40.56% said use of condoms during sexual intercourse which was similar to findings condom protects HIV/ AIDS 69.5%, STD is treatable 78.1% and 45.9% respectively.¹² The attitudes on HIV/ AIDS and behavior mean score was 4.11 \pm 0.538 ranging from two to five with total mean score of 53.5.

CONCLUSION

The awareness on HIV/ AIDS for common people should be pursued. This will help further to minimize spread of disease and help to achieve zero transmission among the world population.

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