

Available online at <http://www.ijims.com>

ISSN: 2348 – 0343

Knowledge attitude among medical officers regarding HIV/AIDS working in different Public Health Institutions of Punjab

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Abstract

Medical officers play an important key role in the health care delivery system in the public sector. Hence their knowledge, attitude practices about HIV/AIDS is very crucial. This study was conducted during the period 2005-06 among 250 medical officers at Health & family welfare training Centre in Amritsar, Punjab, to assess the knowledge of the key personnel of the department of public health institutions of the Punjab State i.e. medical officers. 60.4% medical officers were posted in the institutions located in rural areas. Out of the total, 80.4% medical officers were in the age group 30-50 years. 60.0% of medical officers opined that HIV + positive person develop AIDS within 5-10 years. 90.0 % medical officers cited that there should be no disclosure of HIV/ AIDS status to anyone. 68.8% had the view that the test for confirmation is a Weston Blot test. 87.2% of medical officers mentioned the use of gloves as a universal precaution. Observations of the study revealed that there is a definite deficiency, about the basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS among medical officers. Regular updates are recommended at the monthly meeting at each institution, especially for the medical officers working at public health Institutions.

Key Words:-HIV testing, universal precautions, BCG vaccination, care of AIDS patients.

Background

The first confirmed evidence of AIDS infection in India came in April 1986 when six prostitutes from Tamilnadu were found positive for HIV antibodies. (Kumari)². HIV/AIDS has become the most serious public health problem for India with one of the highest rate of spread in the World.(Gill)¹. Studies conducted in various parts of the country have confirmed that HIV infection has shifted from high risk population to the general population in India (Joshi).³AIDS destroys both human life social fabric of the society. No other disease in history has been studied so extensively in so short period as AIDS.It thrives on human ignorance. It is not curable no vaccine available. Amongst healthcare professional, medical officers are an important component especially in the public health institutions where medical officers also play an important role to educate guide the other staff members of the health team. Hence the knowledge of the medical officers should be up to date. Education is the only way to combat HIV/AIDS. Education acts as 'social vaccine' & is only the preventable tool. Education information have been

identified as being among the most powerful weapons in the fight against AIDS (Rostant, 1997).⁴Assessing Awareness & attitude amongst key health provider's i.e. medical officers, regarding HIV/AIDS, provide reasonable estimates of effecting with the 'social vaccine'.

Objective: To study Awareness & attitude of Medical officers regarding HIV/AIDS.

Material & Methods

This study was conducted amongst medical officers attending various training courses at Health & family Welfare Training Centre, Amritsar. A pretested questionnaire was distributed among the present medical officers. Information was gathered regarding age, education, duration of service, Knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS sts for, Duration of HIV + person to AIDS patient, care of AIDS patient, about HIV test, universal precautions etc. This sample constitutes the medical officers representing from half of the districts of Punjab State.

Results

Out of the total 250 participants,147 were male 103 females.157 medical officers were graduate 93 were post graduates.80.4% medical officers were in the age group 30-50 years. Only7. 2% medical officers were >50 years of age.20.8% medical officers were posted at Sub –sidiary Health Centres, at PHC/ CHC located in the rural area while 39.6% medical officers were posted at, Sub DivisionalHospital,Civil Hospital, ESI other institutions which are located in Urban Areas.

97.2% medical officers knew about the full form of AIDS 86.0% of HIV. Only 51.2% medical officers gave the correct answer regarding window period. 60.0% of medical officers opined that HIV + positive person develops AIDS in 5-10 years while 30.0% more than 10 years.

90.0% medical officers cited that there should be no disclosure of HIV/ AIDS status to anyone. .But 94.0% medical officers had views that there should be screening for HIV before marriage.

Regarding the tests for detection of HIV/AIDS, 89.6% said about ELISA, 34.8% tridot 34.4% PCR 8.4% CD4 Cells & viral load as the tests for detection of HIV.

68.8% medical officers mentioned Western blot, 42.8% PCR, 22.4% ELISA ,5.2 % CD4 cells &5.5% other tests as the confirmatory tests for HIV/AIDS..

Regarding universal precautions 87.2% cited use of gloves, 49.0% HIV testing before operation, 36.0% proper disposal of waste material, 10.0% use of goggles, 6.8% immediately washing hs&5. 2 % use mask mentioned as a universal precautions.

43.6% of medical officers had view that BCG vaccination should be done while 10.4% after knowing HIV status of the children 9.6% did not answer the question.

93.6% medical officers were of the view that HIV/AIDS patients care should be at home.

Discussion & Conclusion

This study to assess the general views of medical officers, regarding HIV/AIDS.

Observations of the study reveal a definite deficiency, in basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS. It also reflects the gap between trainee & trainer. In spite of various in service trainings for medical officers, the disparity between desired achieved a level of knowledge still exists. Knowledge of medical officers on basic aspects of HIV/AIDS is not satisfactory, so regular updates are recommended at monthly meeting at each institution, especially for the medical officers working at Dispensary & PHC Levels.

Acknowledgement

The author extends their gratitude to the medical officers who willingly cooperated with author of this study.

Conflict Interest-nil

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