

Knowledge and attitude towards HIV/AIDS among nursing students of College of Nursing, Jaffna

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Abstract- HIV/AIDS is one of the major health outbreaks which causes mortality in global level more than 1.1 million deaths annually. HIV infected people were highly discriminated and neglected by nurses during their clinical practice due to the misconceptions and misbeliefs regarding HIV/AIDS. In future, nursing students have to work in hospitals and they have responsibility to provide quality care to the HIV infected patients. Therefore, there is a need to enhance the level of knowledge and attitude of the students regarding HIV/AIDS which is very important to eradicate discrimination and negligence of HIV/AIDS infected patients. A cross sectional study was carried out among all students at College of Nursing, Jaffna to assess the knowledge and attitude towards HIV/AIDS. The data were collected using an adapted self-administered questionnaire which consists of 25 questions to assess knowledge, and 15 questions to assess attitude. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21 statistical software. 92 students participated in this study. The results of the study revealed that 60.9% of students had good level of knowledge and 39.1% of students had adequate level of knowledge with the mean of 36.98 (SD+6.37). The positive and negative attitudes towards HIV/AIDS among participants were 96.7%, 3.3% respectively. This study concluded that students of College of Nursing had good knowledge and positive attitude on HIV/AIDS. Most of the students had good knowledge on HIV/AIDS, its mode of transmission, and prevention.

Key words - Knowledge, Attitudes, HIV, Nursing

INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS was identified as one of the world disasters by World Health Organization. (NACO, 2010-2011). The disease which has invaded mankind universally and has no cure yet, it is a complex health problem for individual, families, friends and the community as a whole. For people living with HIV, the associated stigmatization and discrimination are major deterrents that discourage them from seeking timely testing and treatment. (El-nady et al, 2010). Many HIV/AIDS infected individuals are unable to work due to related opportunistic infections requiring expensive medications, there by leading to adverse financial repercussions on their families. Currently HIV/AIDS is one of the major outbreaks which cause mortality in global level more than 1.1 million deaths annually (United Nations ADIDS (2016)). Among the Health care workers, nurses are the one who spending most of the time with HIV infected patients. As nurses are doing invasive procedures for HIV infected patients, they fear to give proper care to those patients.

With the increasing incidence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and its enormous impact on health system, it is important to enhance the level of knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among nursing students. Most of the students irrespective of their choice of specialty after graduation will eventually come in contact with HIV/AIDS patients. There might be a distinct possibility of biases, misconceptions and negative feelings held during the period of clinical rotation or training which can result in unwillingness, or even refusal of care to certain patients. (Nurlign Abebe et al., 2014). Negative attitudes and misbelieves are the major barrier factors to give quality care. Nurses do not talk about HIV/AIDS related facts because of social stigma and misconception. Therefore, they cannot educate others and cannot promote awareness among vulnerable groups. In future, nursing students have to work in hospitals and they have responsibility to give qualitative care to the HIV/AIDS infected patients. Therefore, this study was aimed to enhance the level of knowledge and attitude of the students regarding HIV/AIDS which is very important to eradicate discrimination and negligence of HIV/AIDS infected patients

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was institutional based descriptive cross-sectional study carried out among all students of college of nursing, Jaffna. In this study, the whole population was utilized as sample. Sample size needed was 299 nursing students. However in College of Nursing, Jaffna only 117 nursing students were available and it was able to do in 92 participants with consent as the third year students were not available during my data collection period due to psychiatric posting. Therefore, researcher collected information from all students. An English self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire had two sections (A and B). The variables were identified according to the specific objectives. Section-A included knowledge related questions, and Section- B included about questions regarding attitudes.

The questionnaire regarding knowledge was adapted using a brief HIV knowledge Questionnaire (HIV-KQ-18) developed by Carey and Schroder. (Carey et al, 2002). The questions regarding attitude was developed by researcher with the help of supervisor and reviews of literature. Section-A consists of 25 questions regarding nursing student's knowledge towards HIV/AIDS related to HIV (4 questions), modes of transmission (12 questions) and prevention (9questions). Section-B consisted of 15 statements regarding student's attitude towards HIV/AIDS.

Ethical approval was obtained from Ethical Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna, and permission for

data collection was obtained from the principal, College of Nursing, Jaffna. The participants were given self administered questionnaire after their lectures and their inter discussion was restricted to prevent data contamination. They were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with each of the given statements. Responses to the statements were coded like, 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-don't know, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree. The pre-test was conducted in ten nursing students from Unit of Allied Health Sciences, University of Jaffna. According to their responses; the questionnaire was modified to get proper response. The data were collected from the nursing students using a self-administered questionnaire. The purpose, outcome, benefits and written consent were obtained. Confidentiality was ensured during the data collection. Data were entered in SPSS 21 and analyzed using chi square test.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

This was an institutional based descriptive cross sectional study conducted at College of Nursing, Jaffna. There were 92 students participated in this study. The highest mark obtained by the students was 50 the lowest was 23. The mean of marks of the students on knowledge regarding HIV was 36.98. The knowledge on HIV/AIDS was good (60.9%) among the total study population. Among this study population (39.1%) had average knowledge on HIV/AIDS. 100% of students has given correct response for causative agent for HIV/AIDS is a Virus. Majority of the students (96.7%) knew that HIV is confirmed by blood test. In this study, 13.2% of students were uncertain to the question regarding symptoms of HIV/AIDS. Nursing students had lack of knowledge related to arising symptoms after HIV (AIDS) infected. Due to this knowledge deficiency, nursing students can't provide good care and unable to identify the infected patients. Only 64.1% of participants believed that HIV can be transmitted from infected mother to newborn child. 31(33.7%) students gave incorrect response to the vertical transmission of HIV. According to the vertical transmission, nursing students had poor knowledge. As a result of this, nursing students can't give health education to the general public and unable to educate mothers in antenatal clinics. Nearly half of the population 31(33.7%) believed that HIV (AIDS) was transmitted via blood and body fluids. In this study, 75% nursing students had good knowledge that HIV can be transmitted via kissing an infected person when oral ulcer present. This study shows that only 64.7% of students knew that HIV/AIDS cannot be transmitted by mosquito or insects bite.

This study revealed that nursing students had less misconceptions regarding HIV/AIDS transmission. However 31.5% of participants had false belief that HIV/AIDS can be transmitted via mosquito bite. Overall knowledge was good (60.9%) among nursing students but some participants responded incorrectly to some important questions. Therefore, conflicts

were arisen regarding the basis of knowledge. In this study, 78.3% of participants responded correctly for the usage of condom during intercourse can prevent HIV/AIDS, 58.7% of students knew that HIV/AIDS has anti-viral therapy, but most of the students (41.3%) failed to give correct answer to this treatment question. Majority (89.1%) of students knew about universal precautions while using needles and sharp instruments in hospital. 77.1% of nursing students knew that there is no use of vaccine and anti-bacterial agents in HIV/AIDS prevention. At the same time 14.1%, 7.6% of students believed that vaccine, and anti-bacterial agents could prevent HIV/AIDS respectively. Majority of nursing students 36 (39.1%) confidently believed that HIV/AIDS can cure with traditional herbs. nearly half of the participants didn't know anti-viral therapy. Nursing students did not aware of the facts on treatment and prevention. These wrong responses made controversy of their knowledge. The mean mark of the students on attitude regarding HIV/AIDS was 44.54. Among this population, 96.7% had positive attitude, only 3.3% of students had negative attitude towards HIV/AIDS. Majority of the population go with positive way regarding HIV/ (AIDS). They had favorable outlook towards HIV/AIDS infected patients with caring manner. This study had shown 30.4% of students agreed that AIDS is a disease of immoral people. However 27.2% participants had negative attitude according to the sympathy towards HIV/AIDS. Due to social stigma participants also hesitated to show sympathy towards HIV/AIDS infected patients.

Majority of students (62%) agreed to give same quality of care to infected patients in hospital by the health care workers. Majority (43.4%) of students disagreed with it is not important in spending time to treat HIV/AIDS infected patients.

These are positive feedback of nursing students according to the care of HIV/AIDS infected patients 'care. Similar studies also reported nearly same and supported with this present study's results. This study revealed that the attitude towards HIV/AIDS among the nursing students (96.7% and 3.3% had positive attitude, and negative attitude respectively). Small number of students reacted negatively about the care giving for infected students because of fear. However this study results reflect that the nursing students could be able to give good adequate, qualitative care to HIV/AIDS infected patients in their clinical practices with their good knowledge and adequate attitude. Even though most of them (40.2%) agreed that Health care providers have fear to give care to the HIV infected patients. Participants had fear regarding HIV/AIDS and that is a barrier for quality care in clinical practice.

The present study had shown that the knowledge on HIV/AIDS among the nursing students was good (60.9% students in good knowledge and 39.1% in adequate knowledge). Participants did not know some important facts related to HIV/

AIDS transmission and prevention. This knowledge is very important to nursing students to educate others and give good care as they are going to work as nursing staffs very soon.

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