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Research Article

Knowledge, Attitude and Perception about HIV/AIDS among Adolescent School Children in Northern Hilly City: A Pilot Study

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Abstract: **Background:** Inadequate knowledge about HIV/AIDS, indulgence in risky health behavior leads the adolescents susceptible to this deadly disease. A number of studies conducted in different parts of India revealed widespread ignorance and misconceptions about this disease among young people. **Methods:** This cross sectional pilot study was conducted among two senior secondary schools in Shimla city. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools and two classes from each school (11th and 12th) were selected and 25 adolescents from each class were included. Information regarding their socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitude and perception regarding HIV/AIDS were obtained using a self-administered, pre-tested, semi-structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Epi info v7 software using appropriate statistical tests.**Results:** Among the 100 adolescent, most of the students (55%) were in the age group of 17-19 years, maximum (54%) were male , 76% students belongs from joint family , 49% of students father and 36% of students mother were have educational status upto senior secondary level , 45% of students father were employed in government sector, 80% of students mother were housewife, 22% of student have their family income above >20,000 rupees and 55% of the students having their source of information about HIV/AIDS were teachers.4% students having very good knowledge, 32% having good knowledge, 14% students having very good attitude, 35 % having good attitude,3 % students having very good perception and 27% having good perception about HIV/AIDS.A Correlation between attitude, knowledge and perception of the students was found to be statistically significant. **Conclusions:** These finding indicate that there is need to further increase the knowledge, attitude and perception regarding HIV/AIDS that can be increased by ongoing teaching programmes to the school students. Life skill education with HIV/AIDS awareness should be implemented in schools**.**

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Perception, HIV/AIDS, Adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is one of the most rapid phases of development, constitute 10-19 years of age. It is also one of the most crucial stages in the life of an individual, metamorphosing from being a child into becoming responsible adults (Vijayageetha, M. *et al.*, 2017). It is a stage of physiological, mental and social transformation which accompanies inquisitiveness, impulsiveness and experimentation, makes them prone for risky health behaviors which make them vulnerable to various diseases especially sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS (Vijayageetha, M. *et al.*, 2017; Kalapriya, C. 2017).

HIV/AIDS has emerged as a major health problem and challenges to health services. Although, a large amount of accessible information is available everywhere about this deadly disease and a significant progress made in the last two decades on prevention, control and treatment of HIV/AIDS, the extent of utilization of this knowledge still remains a challenge, that need to be explored (Agarwal, S., & Sushma, B. 2013; Sandhu, P., & Zarabi, D. 2015; and Thakuri, D. S., & Thapa, C. B. 2018).

Inadequate knowledge of development, lack of correct health information, the taboos related with sex education at schools, indulging in risky health behaviors and inaccessibility to adequate reproductive health

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services lends the adolescents susceptible to AIDS (Vijayageetha, M. *et al.*, 2017; Srivastava, A. *et al.*, 2011).

A number of knowledge, attitude, and practice studies conducted in different parts of India reveal widespread ignorance and misconceptions about the disease among young people (Vijayageetha, M. *et al.*, 2017; Joshi, A. V. *et al.*, 2013). As this disease largely relies on prevention and the right information at the right time is essential to bring about a behavioral change when the population is most receptive. Hence, this pilot study was undertaken with the objective to assess the knowledge, attitude and perception towards HIV/AIDS among Adolescent school children in shimla city.

Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate knowledge, attitude and perception of students of Government schools towards HIV/AIDS in Shimla.
- To know the correlation between knowledge, perception and attitude of students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Research Approach -Descriptive
- Research Design-Descriptive survey design
- Setting of the study- Two Selected Senior Secondary School of Shimla City
- Study duration- between May June 2018
- Study population- Senior secondary school students (age 14-19 yrs) of selected school of Shimla
- Sample size-100 students
- Sampling Technique-Purposive Sampling Technique
- Sampling criteria- Two classes (11^{th} and 12^{th}) from each school were selected and 25 adolescents (14-19 years) in the class who were present on the day of the study were selected randomly after explaining the purpose of the study. Informed consent/assent was taken from those children and confidentiality of the selected children was also maintained
- Inclusive Criteria- Students available during the period of data collection in study setting and who were willing to participate in the study.
- Exclusion Criteria: Students who were not willing to participate in the study and who were not present during data collection.
- Development of Tool-Knowledge related questionnaires(20) and attitude related checklist (10 statements) and perception related checklist(10 statements)
- Description of Tool

Section A-Socio-demographic characteristics of the student (Age, Gender, Class, Educational status of parents, Occupation, Type of family, and Source of information regarding HIV/AIDS).

Sections B-There were twenty structured knowledge questionnaire having four options the student have to choose right one. One mark was given for each correct answer and zero for incorrect answer. The maximum score was 20 and minimum score was zero. Scoring was done on the basis of marks as >80%(16-20)=very good,60-79%(12 – 15) =Good,41-59% (8 – 11)=Fair,<40% (< 8)=poor.

Section C and D-There were ten questions of Attitude and perception having the 5 points rating scale as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree and it consists of total 50 marks. There were positive and negative statements. Positive statements were scored 5,4,3,2,1 and negative statements were scored 1,2,3,4,5 respectively Scoring was done on the basis of marks as >80%(40-50)=very good,60-79%(30-39)=Good,41-59%(20-29) =Fair,<40%(<20) =poor

- Validity of tool - by the experts in this field
- Permission- obtained from the concerned head of the schools
- Ethical Consideration- Ethical approval was taken from the Institutional Ethical Committee of Respective schools for conducting the study.
- Data collection by myself under the guidance of supervisors and students was given 15 minutes time to complete that questionnaire and collected at the end of the prescribed time
- Data analysis with appropriate statistical test in terms of frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient. P value of less than 0.05 was considered to be statistically significant.

RESULTS

Table -1: Socio-demographic characteristics of students

Demographic Characteristics	Number of Students(n=100)	Percent (%)
Age In Years		
14-16 Years	45	45
17- 19 Years	55	55
Gender		
Male	54	54
Female	46	46
Class		
10+1	50	50
10+2	50	50
Type Of Family		
Joint	76	76
Nuclear	14	14
Expanded	6	6
Extended	4	4
Educational Status Of Father		
Illiterate	1	1
Primary	5	5
Middle	27	27
Senior Secondary	49	49
Graduate	17	17
Post Graduate	1	1
Educational Status Of Mother		
Illiterate	2	2
Primary	8	8
Middle	39	39
Senior Secondary	36	36
Graduate	14	14
Post Graduate	1	1
Occupational Status Of Father		
Employed In Govt. Sector	45	45
Employed In Priv ate Sector	15	15
Unemployed	5	5
Own Business	18	18
Others	17	17
Occupational Status Of Mother		
Employed In Govt. Sector	11	11
Employed In Private Sector	4	4
Unemployed	1	1
Own Business	1	1
Housewife	80	80
Others	3	3
Monthly Income Of Family (In Rupees)		
Up To 5,000	23	23
5,001 - 10,000	16	16
10,001 - 15,000	17	17
15,001 - 20,000	22	22
>20,000	22	22
Source Of Information		
Parents	33	33
Teachers	55	55
Peers	2	2
Media	10	10

In the present study 45% of the students fall in age group of 14-16 years while 55% was in the age group of 17-19 years. 54% of students were male and 46% were female. 50% students were of 10+1 class and 50 % were in 10+ 2 class. 76% students belong from joint family while 14% were from nuclear family, 6% from expanded family and 4% from extended family. 49% 0f students father were have educational status upto senior secondary level, 27% have upto middle class, 17 % have graduate degree, 5% have education upto primary level ,1% have post graduation degree and 1% were illiterate. Among the educational status of student's mother, 36% were having education upto senior secondary level, 39% having education upto middle class, 14% have graduate degree, 8% having education upto primary school level, 2% were illiterate and 1 % were having post graduate degree. 45% of students father were employed in government sector, 15% were employed in private sector, 5% were unemployed, 18% having their own business and 17% were doing other works like agriculture. Among the occupational status of students mother, 80% were housewife, 11%were employed in government sector, 4% employed in private sector, 1% were unemployed, 1% were having their own business and 3% were doing other works.22% of student have their family income above >20,000 rupees, 22% having between 15,001 - 20,000, 17% having between 10,001 - 15,000, 16% having income between 5,001 - 10,000 and 23% having monthly income < 5000 rupees. Also in the current study, 55% of the students having their source of information about HIV/AIDS were teachers, 33% from parents, 10% from media and 2% from their peer group.

Table-2: Knowledge of students about HIV/AIDS

Category (marks)	Number Of Students(n=100)	Percent
V. Good (16-20)	4	4
Good (12-15)	32	32
Fair (8-11)	41	41
Poor (<8)	23	23

Maximum =20 Minimum=0

In the present study 4% students having very good knowledge (16-20 marks) about HIV/AIDS, 32% having good knowledge(12-15 marks), 41% having fair knowledge(8-11 marks) and 23% students having poor knowledge(<8marks).

Table -3 Attitude of students about HIV/AIDS

Category (Marks)	Number Of Students (n=100)	Percent
V. Good (40-50)	14	14
Good (30-49)	35	35
Fair(20-29)	48	48
Poor(<20)	3	3

Maximum =50 Minimum=10

In the present study 14 % students having very good attitude(40-50 marks) towards HI/AIDS, 35% having good attitude (30-39 marks), 48% having fair attitude (20-29 marks) and 3% having poor attitude (<20 marks).

Table- 4: Perception of students about HIV/AIDS

Category (Marks)	Number Of Students (n=100)	Percent
V. Good (40-50)	3	3
Good (30-39)	27	27
Fair(20-29)	66	66
Poor(<20)	4	4

Maximum =50 Minimum=10

In the present study 3% students having very good perception (40-50 marks) towards HI/AIDS, 27% having good perception (30-39marks), 66% having fair perception (20-29 marks) and 4% having poor perception(<20 marks).

Table-5: Relation between knowledge, attitude and perception scores

	Knowledge	Attitude	Perception
Mean (marks)	10.08	32.51	28.56
Median(marks)	10	30	28
Std. Deviation	3.113	6.859	4.513
Minimum	5	14	17
Maximum	16	48	43

In the present study mean marks and standard deviation of knowledge, attitude and perception of students were 10.08±3.113, 32.51±6.859and 28.56± 4.513 respectively .Among knowledge minimum and maximum marks were 5 and 16, among attitude they were 14 and 48 while in perception they were 17 and 43 respectively.

Table 6: Correlations between attitude and knowledge

Correlations		Knowledge	Attitude	Perception
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	.325**	.321**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	----	.001	.001
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.325**	1	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	-----	.000
Perception	Pearson Correlation	.321**	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	---
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

In the present study Correlations between attitude , knowledge and perception of the students was found to be statistically significant. (p value <0.05)

DISCUSSION

Human immune deficiency virus/acquired Immune deficiency syndrome has immerged a single most formidable challenge to public health, human rights and development in the new millennium. The epidemic of HIV/AIDS is now progressing at a rapid pace among young people. Adolescents comprises about 22%of the population of India .Adolescents and young people of 15-24 years old are the hardest hit by HIV infection worldwide and a significant proportion of them live in India. (Kalapriya, C. 2017).

The purpose of the study is to assess HIV/AIDS related knowledge and understanding how much percentage of said population are having knowledge about this disease so that further intervention can be planned.

Finding of present study reveals 4% students having very good knowledge, 32% having good knowledge, 14% students having very good attitude, 35 % having good attitude,3 % students having very good perception and 27% having good perception about HIV/AIDS. The main sources of information were being teachers and parents. Agarwal S *et al.,* (2013) in their study in Hyderabad found that knowledge about HIV/AIDS was average and the attitude towards people with HIV/AIDS was positive among the students which are similar to our study findings. Kumar P *et al.,* (2012) in their study found that Sixty three percent students were aware about HIV/AIDS and TV was the main source of Information which is against our study finding. Naik AB *et al.,* (2015) in their study among students of Kulgam, Jammu & Kashmir revealed the finding which is similar to our study.Muthuraja M. *et al.,* (2015) in their study among adolescents studying in schools and colleges in Chennai showed that awareness regarding general aspects of AIDS was 64% which is also against our study results. Bharati, M., & Bharati, L. (2014). in their study on higher secondary school students in Jajarkot district of Nepal revealed that majority of students had knowledge about HIV/AIDS which is also against our study findings.Vijayageetha, M. *et al.,* (2017) in their study in urban Mysuru, Karnataka reveled that textbook (73.5%) were the most common source of information about HIV/AIDS which is against our study findings.

CONCLUSION

Our study indicates the presence of substantial lacunae in knowledge regarding AIDS in the population studied. Only One third of the secondary school students had good knowledge, Half had good attitude and almost one third had good perception toward HIV/AIDS **.**There was significant relationship between knowledge, attitude and perception. Major source of information were teachers and parents.

Limitations

The study was confined to small number (100) of secondary school students (age14-19yrs) which limits the generalisation of finding to only the study sample.

Recommendations

On the basis of finding of study, it is recommended that similar study can be conducted in other areas on a large group. It may be done in different settings (convent schools).A comparative study can also be conducted on adolescents studying in rural and urban areas. There is need to further increase the knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS and to clear the misconceptions regarding the disease that can be increased by ongoing teaching programmes to higher secondary school students. Life skill education with HIV/AIDS awareness should be implemented in schools.

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