

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

KNOWLEDGE OF PREGNANT WOMEN REGARDING HIV/AIDS

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ABSTRACT

A descriptive study was conducted with the purpose of assessing the knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the pregnant women in antenatal clinic of Bir Hospital, Kathmandu. Sixty pregnant women were selected using non- probability purposive sampling technique. A pretested Nepali version semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect the data from them. Ethical consideration was maintained throughout the study. The obtained data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data are presented in different tables. Findings related to socio-demographic characteristics revealed that half (50%) percent of the respondents belonged to the age of 20-24years. Majority (88.3%) of the respondents were literate and (85%) of them belonged to Hindu religion. Findings showed that (90%) of respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS. The most common sources of information of HIV/AIDS were Television (77.8%), Radio (75%) and newspapers (66.7%). Regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS, majority (88.9%) knew that HIV/AIDS is transmitted from sexual contact with infected person (81.5%) knew from infected blood transfusion and (70.4%) said from infected mother to child. More than (80%) of respondents said that commercial sex worker and having multiple sex workers were the high risk group for HIV/AIDS. Majority (77.8%) said by avoiding multiple sex partners and (72.2%) being faithful to the partner was the preventive measures of HIV/AIDS. Majority (61%) of respondents did not know the relationship between STI and HIV/AIDS. Majority (68.5%) of respondents did not know that there is available of drugs which lengthen the living years of life of people living with HIV/AIDS. Majority 51(98.1%) knew the use of condom is to prevent pregnancy, 44(84.6%) said prevent HIV/AIDS, 29(55.8%) said control STI. Although majority of the respondents had knowledge regarding the high risk group, mode of transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS, some lacking areas has been identified that majority of the respondents were not aware about the the relationship between STI and HIV/AIDS. They also lacked awareness that use of condom controls STI and about availability of drug which prevents progression of HIV infection. On the basis of finding, it is concluded that health education and awareness programme should be planned to women attending the antenatal clinic to enhance their knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention and management.

**Key Words:** Knowledge, HIV/AIDS and Pregnant Women.

INTRODUCTION

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) was first recognized internationally in 1981. Since then AIDS has become the most devastating and threatening disease of human. HIV/AIDS is rapidly increasing in most countries of the world, including Nepal. <sup>1</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa remains the most seriously affected region, with AIDS remaining the leading cause of death there. Initially the epidemic was concentrated in the African continent but now it is rapidly increasing in Asia. Currently more than 7.1 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in South Asia. <sup>4</sup> As estimated, 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, including 19 million women and 2.5 million children under the age of 15 and total of 3.1 million people died by AIDS. <sup>8</sup> The HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the most serious health concerns in the world today because of its high case fatality rate and lack of a curative treatment or vaccines. <sup>9</sup> Every day, over 6800 persons become infected with HIV and over 5700 persons die from AIDS, mostly because of inadequate access

to HIV prevention and treatment services. The HIV pandemic remains the most serious of infectious disease challenges to public health. <sup>4</sup>

Nepal is among the least developed countries in the world with immense problems such as poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, gender inequality; trafficking and youth unemployment has all the predisposing factors for the spread of HIV/AIDS. <sup>8</sup> The first case of AIDS in Nepal was reported in 1988. HIV/AIDS are emerging as major threat to Nepal's socio economic and health sectors. <sup>1</sup> Currently it is estimated that there are an average of 70,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in Nepal with an estimated 3,000 deaths annually. <sup>2</sup> Out of the estimated 900,000 annual pregnancies, 1800 pregnancies are estimated to occur in HIV positive women leading to about 450- 810 (transmission 25-45%) infected newborns. This vertical transmission of HIV can be reduced to 2% by intensive intervention such as potent

antiretroviral drugs, caesarean section at 38 weeks of pregnancy, and complete avoidance of breastfeeding. <sup>3</sup> Women are sexually, economically and biologically more vulnerable to HIV infection and AIDS. Lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS is one of the main reasons why the transmission rate is so severe. So the prevention, education and awareness are the key elements of HIV/AIDS policy. <sup>11</sup>

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A descriptive study design was used. The study was conducted in the antenatal clinic of Bir Hospital of Kathmandu from January 2008 to August 2008. The sample size of the study was sixty pregnant women and the samples were selected using non-probability purposive sampling technique. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed by reviewing literature. Validity of the instrument was established by seeking the opinion of the subject matter expertise and research expert. Instrument was translated into Nepali version with the help of Nepali language expert and was pre-tested among the 6 similar mothers attending the antenatal clinic of TU, Teaching Hospital.

Prior to collecting data, administrative approval was obtained from the authority of the institutions, Bir Hospital through written request. Data was collected by the researcher interviewing individual mother after taking informed consent from them. Number was coded in the instrument instead of respondents' name to maintain anonymity and confidentiality. The collected data were reviewed daily for completeness and accuracy. Collected data were analyzed by using descriptive and simple statistical tools and the data are presented in different tables.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 shows that among 60 respondents, majority 54 (90%) had heard about HIV/AIDS and the main source of information of HIV/AIDS was from Television (77.8%), Radio 41(75.9%), Newspapers 36 (66%) and from School Teachers 29(53.7%) respectively.

**Table 1: Respondents Knowledge Regarding source of Information about HIV/AIDS (n=54)**

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Television	42	77.8
Radio	41	75.9
News papers	36	66.7
Magazines	20	37.0
Family/Relatives	23	42.6
School teachers	29	53.7

\*Multiple responses

Table 2 shows that majority of respondents had knowledge regarding meaning of HIV/ AIDS. Fatal disease, Sexually

transmitted disease, and preventable disease were stated as the meaning of HIV/AIDS by 70.4%, 64%, and 16.7% respectively.

**Table 2: Respondents' Knowledge about Meaning of HIV/AIDS (n=54)**

Understand about AIDS	Frequency	Percent
Sexual transmitted disease	35	64
Fatal disease	38	70.4
Preventable disease	9	16.7
Don't know	7	13.0

\* Multiple responses

Table 3 shows that majority of respondents had knowledge regarding the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Having sexual intercourse with infected person, using contaminated needles and syringes, from infected blood transfusion, having multiple sexual partners and from infected mother to child were stated as the causes of HIV transmission by 88.9%, 85.2%, and 81.5% 74.4% and 70.4% respectively.

**Table 3: Respondents Knowledge Regarding Transmission of HIV/AIDS (n=54)**

Knowledge regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS	Frequency	Percent
Having sexual intercourse with infected person	48	88.9
From infected mother to child	38	70.4
Wearing infected person's clothes	3	5.6
By using contaminate needles and syringe	46	85.2
From infected blood transfusion	44	81.5
Hand shaking and hugging	2	3.7
Having multiple sexual partner	40	74.4

\*Multiple Responses

Table 4 shows that commercial sex workers, multiple sexual partners, IV drug users and having premarital sexual relationship were stated as the high risk group for HIV by 83.3%, 83.3%, 75.9%, and 29.6% respectively.

**Table 4: Respondents Knowledge Regarding High Risk Groups of HIV/AIDS (n=54)**

High risk groups	Frequency	Percent
Commercial sex workers	45	83.3
IV drug users	41	75.9
Having multiple sexual partners	45	83.3
Premarital sexual relationship	16	29.6
Any person	6	11.1

\*Multiple Responses

Table 5 shows that out majority of respondents knew about the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Avoiding multiple sex partner, keeping single sex partner, abstaining from sexual activity, And use of condom was stated as the prevention of HIV/AIDS by 77.8%, 72.2%, 64.8% and 55% respectively.

**Table 5: Respondents Knowledge on Prevention of HIV/AIDS (n=54)**

Knowledge regarding prevention of HIV/AIDS	Frequency	Percent
Abstaining from sexual activity	35	64.8
Avoiding multiple sex partner	42	77.8
Being faithful to sex partner	39	72.2
Having intercourse with same sex	6	11.2
Use of condom	30	55.6
Don't know	4	7.4

\*Multiple responses

Table 6 shows that majority 52(86.7%) of respondents knew about condom. Prevention of pregnancy, protection from HIV/AIDS and control of STI were stated as the use of condom by 98.1%, 84.6%, and 55.8% respectively.

**Table 6: Respondents' Knowledge Regarding Condom (n=60)**

Do you know about condom	Frequency	Percent
Yes	52	86.7
No	8	13.9

If yes, use of condom	(n=52)	
Prevent pregnancy	51	98.1
Protect from HIV/AIDS	44	84.6
Control STI	29	55.8

\*Multiple responses

**DISCUSSION**

The study revealed that majority (88.3%) of respondents was literate and the majority (56.3%) of respondents was housewives. More than half of the respondents were residing in single family and remaining 41.6% were living in joint family. Majority (90%) of respondents had heard about HIV/AIDS. The most effective source of information for providing information to the people in the community was television (77.8 %,) radio (75.9%) which was similar to the study done by Mazloomly (2006),<sup>12</sup> that radio and television (70%), were the most popular source of information. Regarding the meaning of HIV/AIDS majority (70.4%) of the respondents knew AIDS is a fatal disease, (64%) knew is sexually transmitted disease, only (16.7%) knew is a preventable disease. Regarding the mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS, majority (88.9%) respondents had knowledge that HIV/AIDS get transmitted through sexual contact with infected person, (85.2%) had knowledge about using contaminated needles and syringes, (81.5%) had knowledge using infected blood transfusion and (70.4%) had knowledge that HIV/AIDS get transmitted from infected mother to child. Similar type of study done by Mazloomly (2006)<sup>11</sup>, majority (85.8%) of the respondents said by blood transfusion, (82.5%) said through sexual transmission (73.3%) said by mother to child transmission.

Regarding knowledge about high risk group, commercial sex worker, having multiple sexual partners, I/V drug users were answers of 83.3%, 83% and 75.9% respondents. In a study done by Sharma (2007)<sup>13</sup> among adult group revealed that commercial sex worker (79%) and Injecting drug users (86.6%) were the high risk group of HIV/AIDS. This study concludes that commercial sex worker, multiple sex partners and injecting drug users are the main risky group for the transmission of HIV/AIDS in Nepal. Findings regarding the preventive measures of HIV/AIDS, (77.8%) said by avoiding multiple sex partners, (77.2%) said by being faithful to sex partner and (55.6%) said by using condom. Similar study done by Mazloomly (2006),<sup>11</sup> (61.7%) answered using condom, (49.2%) knew that avoiding sharing needles in drug abusers can prevent the AIDS transmission. Majority (61%) of respondents did not know the relationship between STI and HIV/AIDS. Regarding the availability of drug majority (37%) of respondents said that the drug for the treatment of HIV/AIDS is not available, (31.5%) said there is available of drug and (31.5%) did not know about the drug. Majority (86.7%) knew about the condom. Regarding the use of condom, majority (98.1%) of respondents said prevent pregnancy, (84.6%) said prevent HIV/AIDS and (55.8%) said control sexually transmitted disease.

## CONCLUSION

Though the findings had showed that the majority of pregnant mothers had knowledge regarding the high risk group, mode of transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS, there was some lacking areas that majority of the respondents were not aware about the relationship between STI and HIV/AIDS and they did not know about the availability of drug which lengthen the living years of life of people living with HIV/AIDS. Since awareness is the only key to enhance their knowledge about HIV/AIDS, there is an urgent need to increase the awareness about HIV/AIDS, especially among all women attending the antenatal clinic of the community using all methods of mass media and intensive information, education and communication activities.

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