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Research Management Cell (RMC)
Dhankuta Multiple Campus, Dhankuta
Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Knowledge on Unsafe Abortion among Adolescent Students of Sarbamangala Secondary School, Kavre

Bishnumani Kafle¹
Email: kaflebishnumani@gmail.com

Abstract

Unsafe abortion is a major health risks for women of the reproductive age group and is also a critical issue among adolescence. Due to lack of knowledge, awareness and lack of resources adolescents are facing problems. The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge regarding unsafe abortion among adolescent students. A descriptive study was carried out among adolescent students of Sarbamangala Secondary School of Kavrepalanchowk district, Nepal. After taking consent, 114 adolescents were selected from grade 9 to 12, purposively and self-administered questionnaires were distributed to them. Gathered data were accomplished through simple mathematical and descriptive way.

Among 114 respondents, just more than half (52.2%) of the respondents were male and near about half (47.8%) of respondents were female. The respondents from grade 9 to 12 were 30.2%, 35.4%, 22.1% and 12.3% respectively and all most of all respondents (97.8%) were unmarried. The study reveals that only 34.2% of them had understood the meaning of unsafe abortion. Majority of respondents (78.5%) had inadequate knowledge, 20.2% respondents had moderate knowledge and few respondents (1.3%) had adequate knowledge regarding the unsafe abortion.

This study concludes that there is lack of knowledge regarding abortion, legalization of abortion, unsafe abortion and its consequences among adolescent students of rural area. Awareness program on abortion can be conducted among the adolescent students to prevent unsafe abortion.

Keywords: *abortion, adolescent students, knowledge, legalization, unsafe*

¹ Mr. Kafle is a of Lecturer of Health and Physical Education, at Tribhuvan University, Mahendra Ratna Campus, Tahachal.

Introduction

Abortion is the expulsion or extraction of a fetus or an embryo from its mother which before 28 weeks or weights 500 grams or less (WHO, 1997). It cannot survive outside of uterus. Abortion will be either spontaneous, which is voluntarily without manual pressure or abortion will be induced by manual pressure. Unwanted pregnancy and induced abortion occur in every society. Comparing with other women, adolescents face a higher risk of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion with devastating consequences for their health. As a result of early marriage, lack of access and ability to use contraceptive and many forms of sexual exploitation, adolescents are more likely to get unwanted pregnancy than adult women (CRLP, 2002).

The practice of abortion dates back to ancient times. Pregnancies were terminated through a number of methods, including the administration abortifacient herbs, the use of sharpened instruments, the application of abdominal pressure and other techniques. The first recorded evidence of induced abortion is from a Chinese document records performed upon Royal concubines in China the year 500 B.C. and 515 B.C. They specially advised the dancers for abortion in that period. In the same way 19th century medicine saw progress in the field of surgery, and sanitation. In the same era, the doctors with the American Medical Association lobbied for bans on abortion and advertisement of abortion medicines, instruments and abortion services access to abortion continued (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2003).

An estimated 22 million abortions continue to be performed unsafely each year resulting in the death of an estimated 47000 women (WHO, 2012). About 208 million women estimated to become pregnant each year worldwide. It is also estimated that worldwide about 46 million pregnancies (22% of total pregnancies and 61% of unintended pregnancies) are aborted. About 287000 women die annually from pregnancy related causes worldwide. 90 percent of maternal deaths occur in less developed countries (WHO, 2004). The number of women who had an unmet need for modern contraception in 2012 was 22 million (Singh & Darroch 2012). An estimated 80 million unintended pregnancies occurred in 2012 in developing world as a result of contraceptive failure and nonuse among women who did not want pregnancy soon. Those unintended pregnancy resulted in 30 million unplanned births, 40 million abortion and 10 million miscarriages. It is also estimated that 5 million adolescents between the ages 15 and 18 have unsafe abortion each year and 70000 abortion-related deaths occur among this group every year (UNFPA, 2004). In Nepal, the data suggest that more than a quarter of all pregnancies (MOH, New Era & ORC Macro, 2012) and 41% of the last pregnancy among currently pregnant women are unintended (Adhikari & et.al. 2009). Nepal Family Planning Association, Jhapa had provided safe abortion services to two hundred ninety eight females. Among them one hundred twenty two females were unmarried (Nagaric Dainik, 2060 BS.). This fact proves that more unmarried females are involving in unsafe abortion practices in Nepalese context.

Abortion was legalized in Nepal since 2002 and the country has made striking progress in rolling out induced abortion services, establishing comprehensive abortion care at 100% of public sector site at the regional, zonal and district level and 46% of primary health care centers (PHC). As a result, more than 500000 Nepali women have been served with safe abortion care since 2002 (Samandari et. al., 2012), while the abortion law in Nepal gives all women the right to abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy; parental consent is required for girls younger than 16

years and adolescents are still facing many socio-cultural and institutional barriers for legal terminations of unwanted pregnancies (Adhikari, 2017).

According to World Health Organization, the meaning of an unsafe abortion as procedure for terminating an unwanted pregnancy either by person lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking minimal medical standards or both. Unsafe abortion is one of the major causes of maternal mortality and morbidity. Nearly half of all abortion worldwide is unsafe and nearly all unsafe abortions (98%) occur in developing countries. The rate of unsafe abortion worldwide is 14 per 1000 women aged 15-44 in 2008 (Sedgh, 2012). Five million adolescents between the age of 15 and 18 have unsafe abortions each year and 70,000 abortions related to deaths occur among this age group every year (Shrestha, 2012). Early marriage and adolescent pregnancies are common in Nepal. According to Demographic Health Survey 2011 (MOH,2011), 29% adolescent girls aged 15-19 years are in formal marriage as compared to 7% of adolescent boys. In comparison with adults, adolescents are more likely to delay the abortion, resort to unskilled person to perform it, use dangerous methods and present late when complication arise (Olukoya, 2004). Unsafe abortion is a critical issue among adolescents. Thus the objective of this study was to assess the knowledge on unsafe abortion among adolescent students of Sarbamangala Secondary School, Kavre, Panchkhal.

Methods and Materials

A descriptive research design was conducted based on quantitative data including 114 adolescent students of class 9 to 12 of Sarbamangala Secondary School of Kavrepalanchowk District. Non-probability purposive sampling method was used. The adolescent students who were interested to participate in the study were included in the sample. Data were collected through the self-administered questionnaire, which was divided into two parts: Demographic information and knowledge on unsafe abortions' information. Sex, education, ethnicity, marital status and religion were taken as an independent variable and knowledge regarding unsafe abortion as a dependent variable. Data collection tool was pre-testing at Janata Secondary School, Hokse, Kavre among 10% of similar characteristics respondents. According to the feedback of the pre-test some modification was done for finalization of the questionnaire.

The study was conducted after the permission taken from concerned authority of the school after explaining the purpose and relevancy of the study, assurance with regards to confidentiality was provided and self-administered questionnaire given to each students. The respondents took approximately forty minutes to complete the questionnaire. Data were checked for completeness and accuracy and further edited. Data were analyzed by descriptive version and simple mathematical way.

The questionnaires had total twenty questions. In which ten questions were related to general information and ten questions were related to unsafe abortion. One point (score one) was given for each corrected answer, while zero was given for each incorrect answer as well as no response answer.

In this study, knowledge refers to a state of awareness of unsafe abortion. It will be measured on the basis of score obtained in knowledge based questions related to unsafe abortion by respondents. Knowledge of respondents is categorized in three levels eg. respondent response correct answer more than 75 percent that was adequate level of awareness, between 50 to 75

percent correct answer that was moderate level of awareness and less than 50 percent correct answer that was inadequate level of awareness of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

A total 114 respondents 52.2 percent (60 respondents) were male and 47.8 percent (54 respondents) were female. 28.9 percent (33 respondents) of them were Kshetri followed by Brahmin, Newar, Danuwar, and others 20.6 percent (24 respondents), 19.7 percent (22 respondents), 9.2 percent (10 respondents), 21.5 percent (25 respondents) respectively. Among them 78.1 percent (89 respondents) were from Hindus, 17.5 percent (20 respondents) were Buddhist, 3.9 percent (4 respondents) were Christians and 0.4 percent (1 respondent) Kirati. Respondents were the students of grades 9, 10, 11 and 12. They were 30.2 percent (35 respondents), 35.4 percent (40 respondents), 22.1 percent (25 respondents) and 12.3 percent (14 respondents) respectively. Almost all of them (111 respondents) were unmarried.

More than quarter of the respondents 28.1 percent (32 respondents) had knowledge about the correct meaning of abortion and nearly half of the respondents 46.1 percent (53 respondents) had good knowledge that the abortions have been legalized in Nepal. Regarding reason for doing abortion 79.8 percent (91 responses) reported unmarried pregnancy and 21.5 percent (25 responses) mention abnormal baby is the reason for abortion.

34.2 percent (39 respondents) respondents were well-known about the correct meaning of unsafe abortion and 71.8 percent (82 responses) reported that young unmarried girl wants to go to unsafe abortion and only few respondents 7.9 percent (9 respondents) mentioned that married women wants to terminate pregnancy unsafely. On the query about why the young girls mostly undergo unsafe abortion, more than half of the respondents 77.1 percent (88 responses) reported about the fear to be exposed to other people about pregnancy and 26 percent (30 responses) respondents reported that due to lack of knowledge about legalization.

Among 114 respondents, 54.5 percent (61 responses) respondents had knowledge about heavy vaginal bleeding as a complication of unsafe abortion. Similarly 49.6 percent (56 responses) had good knowledge that death can occur due to the complication of unsafe abortion and more than half of respondents 63.2 percent (72 responses) got information about unsafe abortion from radio, television, newspaper etc.

This study report shows that 78.5 percent (89 respondents) respondents have inadequate knowledge, less than one quarter of respondents 20.2 percent (23 respondents) have moderate knowledge and few respondents 1.3 percent (2 respondents) have adequate knowledge about unsafe abortion.

Discussion

This study is an attempt to assess the level of adolescents' knowledge regarding unsafe abortion. Regarding the socio-demographic factors, the result showed just more than half of the respondents were male (52.2%) and rest (47.8%) were female, 28.9 percent were Chhetri and 78.1 percent were from Hindu religion. 30.2% (35 respondents) were from grade nine, 35.4% (40 respondents) were from grade ten, 22.1% (25 respondents) were from grade eleven and rest of them 12.3% (14 respondents) were the students of grade twelve. Almost all of the respondents (97.8%) were unmarried.

This study shows that among 114 respondents, more than quarter of the respondents (28.1%) had knowledge about the correct meaning of abortion. This result was supported by the result of the study conducted in Phulbari, Chitwan, Nepal (Silwal,2013) and not supported by a descriptive study conducted in Congo, where more than half of the respondents (61.3%) knew what abortion mean (Paluku, 2010). This study report also focuses that, nearly about half of the respondents (46.1%) had good knowledge on the abortion have been legalized in Nepal. This statement was matched with the study title on unsafe abortion after legalization in Nepal and unsafe abortion, knowledge and perception among in school female adolescents in Zambia (Rocca, 2013 & Lombe,2014) and had not been supported by the study conducted at Nepal Medical college (Tuladhar, 2010).

Reason for doing abortion majority of the responses (79.8%) of respondents were on unwanted pregnancy and less than half of the responses (40.4%) were on illegal pregnancy, 35.1% lack of economy, 27.2% maintain physical structure and 21.5% abnormal baby. This result was matched with the study conducted in various places of Nepal (Rocca, 2013, Silwal, 2013 & Khanal, 2011).

Out of the 114 respondents only one third of the respondents (34.2%) had knowledge about correct meaning of unsafe abortion. This result was comparable with the study on knowledge and practice of abortion among women of Nepal (Khanal, 2011) and majority of respondents (78.5%) had inadequate knowledge and less than one quarter of respondents (21.5%) had adequate knowledge on unsafe abortion. This result was not supported with the study conducted among school girls aged 15-19 years in Kapiri, Mposhi, central province of Zambia (Lombe, 2014).

Conclusion

Majority of the respondents (71.8%) thought young unmarried girls want to go to unsafe abortion and few respondents (7.9%) mentioned married women want to terminate pregnancy unsafely. Regarding queries about the reason for unsafe abortion among young girls more than half of the respondents (77.1%) reported that fear that other people will know about abortion and 26% respondents reported due to lack of knowledge about legalization. 54.5% respondents had mentioned heavy vaginal bleeding is the main complication of unsafe abortion. Majority of respondents mentioned bleeding, infection, infertility, uterine perforation and uterine prolapse in future as well as sometime may occurs death. Majority of respondents (74%) believed that self or individual is responsible to prevent unsafe abortion. Also large number of respondents (78%) thought awareness programs can be the best way to prevent the consequences of unsafe abortion. More than half of the respondents (63.2%) getting information about unsafe abortion from mass media.

It can be concluded that there is lack of knowledge regarding abortion, legalization of abortion, unsafe abortion and its consequences among adolescent students of rural area. Awareness programs on abortion can be conducted among the adolescent students to prevent morbidity and mortality.

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