



Assessing the Knowledge and Practice About Hepatitis. C Prevention in People of Rural Community Lahore

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ABSTRACT

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. It may be self-limiting or can progress to fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis or liver cancer. It may be of type A, B, C, D and E. Hepatitis C is caused by the hep. C virus (HCV) which is a small, positive and single-stranded RNA virus of the body. The present study sought to determine the knowledge and practice regarding prevention of Hepatitis C among people of rural community of Lahore, Pakistan. A descriptive Cross-sectional study design was utilized to perform this study at a rural community of Lahore. Sample of 70 residents was selected using a non-probability convenience sampling method. The data was collected from residents visiting to avail any of the services of PHC, Malik Pur Lahore. After taking consent from the participants, a self-administered questionnaire was used to conduct this study. Total 70 people participated in the study and a healthy percentage of the residents of the community demonstrated sufficient knowledge. The findings of this current study conclude that knowledge of people of Malik Pur community regarding HCV was adequate, majority of participants from the population have knowledge about HCV but reported lack of preventive practices as they do not think this issue as a significant one. Furthermore, there are lack of facilities like testing for HCV in the community.

Keywords: Hepatitis, inflammation, fibrosis, single-stranded RNA, knowledge

1. Introduction

Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver. It may be self-limiting or can progress to fibrosis (scarring), cirrhosis or liver cancer. It may be of type A, B, C, D and E. Hepatitis C is caused by the hep. C virus (HCV) which is a small, positive and single-stranded RNA virus of the body (Afzal, 2018). Its mode of transmission is through blood borne (sharing your razors, safeties, injections, needles and blades when visiting to the barbers, clinics or hospitals). To prevent the risks of spreading the infection use the sterilized equipment, proper disposal of waste blood products and proper discard of the needles and syringes. Tobacco smoking, physical inactivity, improper food intake, and high blood pressure are the key modifiable risk factors in this study (Nawaz et al., 2018). The prevalence of HIV is high in Pakistan. Junk foods are responsible for roughly 12% of elevated cholesterol levels (World Health Organization, 2020). Egypt has the highest prevalence of hepatitis c in the world with a prevalence of more than 20% (Schillie et al., 2018). According to a Peshawar-based survey, Pakistan has demonstrated that there is a lack of information about risk factors. Lack of physical activity is a cause of cardiovascular disease. Sugar addiction, obesity, family history, and stress (Shah et al., 2019).

The present study sought to determine the knowledge and practice regarding prevention of Hepatitis C among people of rural community of Lahore, Pakistan.

Significance of the study

Pakistan is the fifth largest country in the world in the term of population in the list of countries (dependencies) population. It is equivalent to 2.83% of world's population. In Pakistan, almost 12 million people suffering from Hep. C Virus. Each year brings about 150,000 new cases. Majority of people catch this infection in health care settings without being aware of it. The current research will provide correct picture of knowledge and practice of people of rural community of Lahore. This study will provide knowledge to people about preventions of Hep. C Virus. The healthy practices, safe life styles and ways of precautions will help them to prevent themselves from this infection and practice the prevention methods and strategies which is very important for healthy development of the community.

2. Methodology

Research Design: A descriptive Cross-sectional study design was utilized to perform this study.

Setting: The study was conducted in a rural community of Lahore city.

Population and sampling: The residents of Malik Pur were taken as study population. A sample of 315 was calculated using the probability formula but only 70 residents who visited the primary health centre (PHC) meeting the inclusion criteria were recruited in the study sample using a convenience sampling technique.

Inclusion Criteria: Residents between the age group of 20 to 35 years were asked to sign a consent and interviewed.

Exclusion Criteria: Residents having any physical or mental ailment were excluded from the study.

Sample Size: Sample size was determined using probability sampling method.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

N= Total Population

n =Sample Size

$$n = \frac{1500}{1 + 1500(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1500}{1 + 3.75}$$

$$n = \frac{1500}{4.75}$$

$$n = 315$$

Figure 1. Sample size determination

Research Tool: A close-ended survey questionnaire was used to measure the participants' responses.

Data Collection and Analysis: The data was collected from residents visiting to avail any of the services of PHC, Malik Pur Lahore. After taking consent from the participants, a questionnaire was used to interview the participants. Questionnaire was in English language so, researcher translated the questions verbally for participants. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 was used to analyse the collected data.

3. Results

Total 70 people participated in the study and 50% of the participants fall in the age group of 31-35 years followed by 25% who were 26-30 years old and remaining were 20-25 years old. Of all the subjects, 66% were females 94% sampling units were Muslim by religion. A vast number of residents (34%) of that rural community never attended school and 39% of the respondents studied until matriculation. Table 1 below shows the demographic characteristics of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

Demographic data	Percentage		
	Frequency		
Age	20-25yrs	17	25
	26-30yrs	18	25
	31-35yrs	35	50
Gender	Male	24	34
	Female	46	66
Qualification	Matric	27	39
	Intermediate	18	25
	Graduation	1	02

Religion	Illiterate	24	34
	Muslim	66	94
	Christian	4	06
Occupation	Farmer	14	20
	Labour	36	51
	Do not work	20	29
Marital status	Married	49	70
	Divorce	10	14
	Widow	2	03
	Unmarried	9	13

According to this study 75% people have heard about HCV infection. 69.4% people know how it is spread and what are the contaminated blood products and contaminated blood and 32% thought that HCV passes from mother to child during pregnancy. 66.7% people have knowledge that HCV cannot be caught by coming into contact with another person's (holding hands). 58.3% people know that there is no HCV vaccine available for treatment. Majority of people have knowledge that this is not only a teenagers infection but any person can be effected at any time. 58.3% people agreed that it spreads by using and sharing toothbrush with other. 76.4% people have knowledge that HCV is not spread able through sharing food and water. Majority of 61.1% people have knowledge that it is spread through using contaminated syringes and blood products. 54.2% - 55.6% people agreed that it is spread by diseased blades used by the barbers and by using contaminated tattoo and piercing needles. 77.8% people ask for new syringe whenever they visit to doctor. 80% people demands a new blade when go to barber shop. People of this rural community have heard about HCV infection but lack of proper practices about the prevention. Table 2 shows the participants' responses to each item in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Participants' response for items in the questionnaire

No.	Item	Yes	No
1.	Have you ever heard about HCV?	77%	23%
2.	Is Hepatitis C caused by virus ?	60%	40%
3.	Can you get infected with hepatitis by coming into contact with another person who is positive for HCV?	63%	37%
4.	Do you know about vaccine for HCV?	40%	60%
5.	If HCV can affect a person of any age ?	26%	74%
6.	Does it transmit to others by sharing a toothbrush with an infected person?	60%	40%
7.	Does it transmit to others by contaminated water and food?	79%	21%
8.	Does it transmit to others through tainted blood?	71%	29%
9.	Does it transmit to others via syringes that haven't been sterilized?	63%	37%
10.	Does it transmit to others by diseased blades used by barbers?	56%	34%
11.	Does it transmit from mother to child during pregnancy?	33%	67%
12.	Did you ever get yourself tested for HCV?	43%	57%
13.	Do you ask your doctor to use a new syringe every time?	80%	20%
14.	Do you ask to use a new blade when you go for a haircut/shave?	84%	16%

4. Conclusion

The findings of this current study conclude that knowledge of people of Malik Pur community regarding HCV was adequate, majority of participants from the population have knowledge about HCV but reported lack of preventive practices as they do not think this issue as a significant one. Furthermore, there are lack of facilities like testing for HCV in the community. More interventions must be planned to disseminate HCV information to the broader community; (posters, booklets, brochures) should be distributed in schools, universities and in public offices to enhance the awareness about prevention of hepatitis c. The government should work for welfare of the community by opening more dispensaries, up to date laboratories. More interventional studies must be planned in future.

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