

AWARENESS REGARDING LINK BETWEEN HIV/AIDS AND STDs.

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ABSTRACT:

Research question : To determine the awareness regarding link between HIV/AIDS and STDs among a rural population.

Objectives :

To assess the level of awareness regarding link between HIV/AIDS and STDs among rural population.

Study Design : Cross Sectional study.

Settings : In the field practice area under Deptt of Community Medicine, Doiwala block of Distt Dehradun.

Participants : 960 individuals between the age of 15-49 yrs.

Statistical Analysis : Chi Square and proportions

Result : Overall awareness for AIDS is 92.5%, 85.1% knew sexual route as mode of transmission with only 51% had knowledge about linkage.

Key words : HIV/AIDS; Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD)

Introduction :

HIV/AIDS is spreading from urban to rural areas and from high risk behavior groups to general population since 1990². Testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can be an effective tool in preventing the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. An understanding of the relationship between STDs and HIV infection can help in the development of effective HIV prevention programs for persons with high-risk sexual behaviours. Individuals who are infected with STDs are at least two to five times more likely than uninfected individuals to acquire HIV infection if they are exposed to the virus through sexual contact. In addition, if an HIV-infected individual is also infected with another STD, that person is more likely to transmit HIV through sexual contact than other HIV-infected

persons¹.

An estimated five percent adult population affected by STDs, also has HIV infection. HIV vulnerability from STDs is furthermore increased as access to treatment of medical care for these diseases is very low, especially among the high risk groups³.

The study is an attempt to highlight lacunae in the knowledge of rural population with respect to cause, effects, modes of transmission and methods of prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs.

Material and Methods :

The study design was cross sectional and carried out over a period of six months in the field practice areas of Rural Health Training Centre, Department of Community Medicine,

Himalayan Institute of Medical Sciences - Doiwala block of District Dehradun. The block comprises of 76 villages with a total population of 1,58,313 individuals. 30 cluster sampling technique⁴ was used to have equal representation from the population. Each cluster was again divided into four sectors, from each sector 8 persons in the age group 15-49 years i.e. 4 Male & 4 Females (from different households) were interviewed, to collect the relevant information and thus from each cluster 32 persons were studied and a total of 960 persons were included in study. Individual information

regarding awareness for HIV/AIDS and STDs was collected on a predesigned and prettested questionnaire after taking informed consent maintaining confidentiality. The questionnaire consisted of questions viz. Have you heard about AIDS excluding HIV and STD; mode of transmission of AIDS; Linkage between AIDS and STDs; whether AIDS is a STD, etc.

Result :

The present study was conducted in a rural community of Dehradun district. the information about the biosocial characteristics of the respondents is as follows:

Table 1
RESPONDENTS BY SEX & AGE

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	(n=480)		(n=480)		(n=960)	
Age (yrs)	No	%	No	%	No	%
15-19	101	21	57	11.9	158	16.5
20-24	103	21.5	98	20.4	201	20.9
25-29	97	20.2	107	22.2	204	21.2
30-34	60	12.5	68	14.3	128	13.4
35-39	44	9.2	76	15.8	120	12.5
40-44	40	8.3	36	7.5	76	7.9
45-49	35	7.3	38	7.9	73	7.6
Total	480	100	480	100	960	100

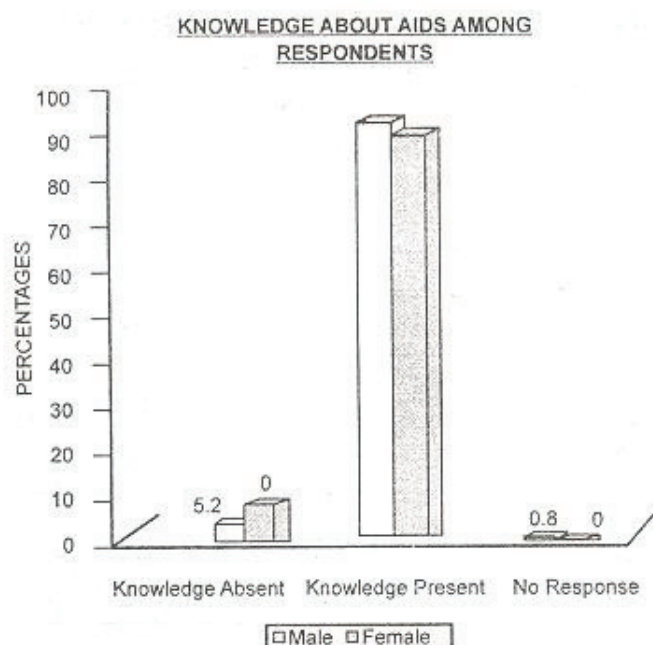
Table 1 depicts that the total respondents, the majority belonged to 25-29 years of age group 21.2 percent. Median age of the respondents was found to be 25.4 years. Most of the male respondents i.e. 21.5 percent belonged to 20-24 years age whereas the majority of the females 22.2 percent were found to be in the age group of 25.29 years.

Table 2
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT AIDS

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	(n=480)		(n=480)		(n=960)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Knowledge Absent	25	5.2	43	9	68	7.1
Knowledge Present	451	94	437	91	888	92.5
Don't know	4	0.8	0	0	4	0.4
Total	480	100	480	100	960	100

($\chi^2=4.97$, $df=01$, $p<0.05$)

Table 2 shows that, awareness of AIDS was 92.5 percent and only 7.5 percent of respondents were not aware of AIDS (figure 1) this difference in knowledge about AIDS was statically significant. ($p<0.05$).



Majority 66.2 percent of respondents told that their source of information regarding knowledge about STDs was through TV/ Radio followed by Books (24.9 percent), News paper (20.7 percent), Doctor (10.9 percent) and Health workers (5.5 percent) that were least.

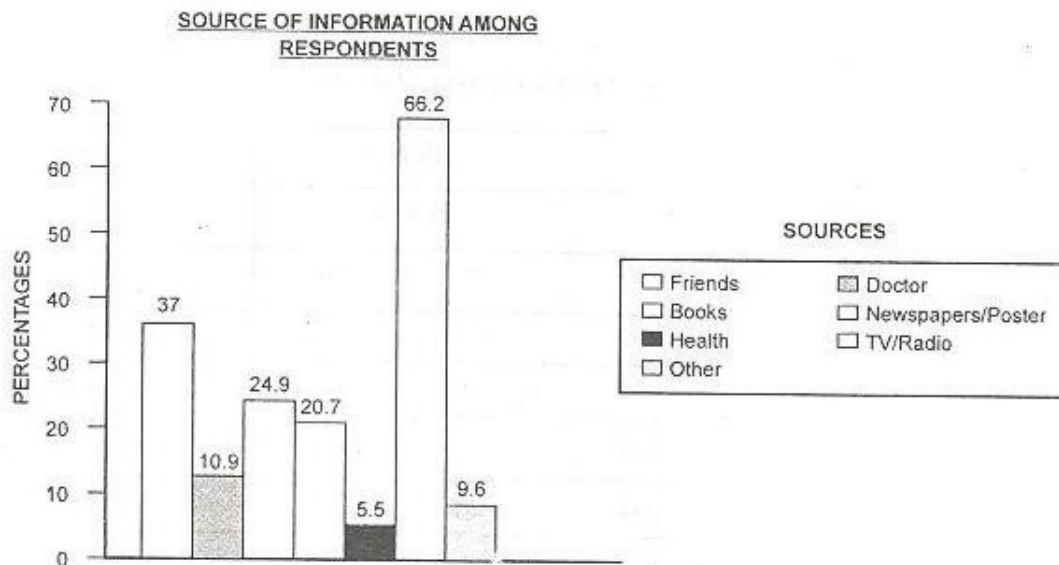


Table 3

KNOWLEDGE OF MODE OF TRANSMISSION OF AIDS AMONG RESPONDENTS

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	(n=480)		(n=480)		(n=960)	
Mode of transmission	No	%	No	%	No	%
Sexual route	414	86.3	403	84	817	85.1
Blood borne	261	54.4	346	72.1	607	63.2
Infected needle	278	57.9	362	75.4	640	66.7
Mother to child	144	30	197	41	341	35.5
Don't Know	49	10	47	9.8	96	10

Table 3 shows, majority (85.1 percent) of the respondents had the knowledge that sexual route is a mode of transmission of AIDS, followed by infected needles 66.7 percent, blood borne (63.2 percent) and the least was mother to child (35.5 percent) (Figure 2).

KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MODS OF TRANSMISSION FOR AIDS AMONG RESPONDENTS

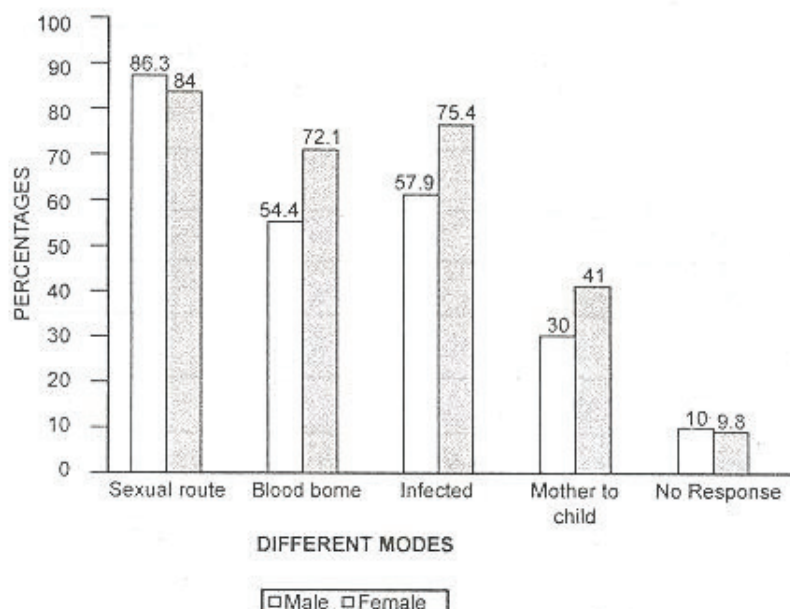


Table 4
KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LINKEGE BETWEEN AIDS AND STDs AMONG RESPONDENTS

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	(n=480)		(n=480)		(n=960)	
Linkage	No	%	No	%	No	%
Knowledge Absent	48	10	21	4.4	69	7.2
Knowledge Present	212	44.2	278	57.9	490	51
Don't know	220	45.8	181	37.7	401	41.8
Total	480	100	480	100	960	100

($\chi^2=16.82, df=01, p<0.05$)

Table 4 shows that, approximately half 51 percent of the respondents had the knowledge about linkage between AIDS and STDs that was statistically significant ($p<0.05$).

Table 5
DO YOU THINK THAT AIDS IS STDs

Sex	Male		Female		Total	
	(n=480)		(n=480)		(n=960)	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Knowledge Absent	47	9.8	33	6.9	80	8.3
Knowledge Present	303	63.1	324	67.5	627	65.3
Don't know	130	27.1	123	25.6	253	26.4
Total	480	100	480	100	960	100

($\chi^2=3.08$, $df=01$, $p<0.05$)

Table 5 shows that, majority (65.3 percent) of respondents think that AIDS is a STD and 34.7 percent doesn't think that AIDS is a STD. Females (67.5 percent) were more aware as compared to males (63.1 percent), that AIDS is a STD with $p < 0.05$.

Discussion :

In the present study, out of 960 respondents surveyed, 47.1 percent belonged to the age group of 25-39 years with median age of respondents of 25.4 years. Similar age group 25.39 years contributed nearly 50 percent of the total respondents among the rural areas surveyed under the National Baseline BSS of NACO with the median age of respondents ranging from 28 to 30 years⁵. In another study 49.1 percent of the general population of urban slum at Lucknow, belonged to 25-35 years of age group⁶. A total of 42 percent of the study subject, were also reported in the same age group in a study conducted in South India⁷.

In this study 66.2 percent of respondents had knowledge about STDs from massmedia, such as Television & Radio followed by other means of information such as newspaper/

posters, friends, etc. Source of information : Television (79.4 percent) and Radio (24.5 percent) were reported in DLHS, RCH-II of Dehradun district⁸.

According to national Family Health Survey III (2005-2006) it was reported that the national figure of rural population that have heard about AIDS is 63.5%, while the percentage is more in males (77%) as compared to females (50%). In the year 2001, under the National AIDS Control Project-II National Baseline BSS was conducted among the general population, that shows, only 45.4 percent of the respondents had knowledge about HIV/AIDS in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh (Uttaranchal being part of it)⁵. Under DLHS-2002, RCH-II of Dehradun district of Uttaranchal, it was reported that rural males (63.1 percent) and females (36.1 percent) had responded to HIV/AIDS positively⁸. In a study among rural women in a South Indian

Community the awareness on HIV/AIDS was found to be 70 percent⁹. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS in tribal population of Rajasthan was reported to be 57.7 percent¹⁰. In National Baseline general population BSS-2001 of Delhi State it was reported that 88.2 percent had ever heard of HIV/AIDS⁵.

The state of NFHS III reveals that overall percentage of knowledge about AIDS ranges from 90 to 100% and 60 to 80% among males & females respectively¹¹. NACO baseline BSS 2001, showed the respondent's knowledge about the mode of transmission as follows: Sexual contact (39.8 percent), HIV+ve blood (42.7 percent), Infected needles (41.3 percent), Vertical Transmission (36.9 percent)⁵.

A very limited community based studies have been carried out on the awareness regarding linkage between HIV and STDs, to mention awareness 23.9 percent have been reported in National Baseline BSS for Delhi by NACO⁵. About 80% of the NGOs rightly pointed out the association between STDs and HIV/AIDS¹².

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