



## Awareness About Hiv/Aids Among Health Workers of Khaltsi Block of Leh District

### KEYWORDS

HIV/ AIDS, Knowledge, Transmission, Prevention

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**ABSTRACT** A cross-sectional study was conducted in Leh district in the month of December 2015. With the rising trends of prevalence of HIV in this area like rest of the world, the health workers are more likely to encounter more cases in the near future. So our objective was to assess the awareness about HIV/AIDS among health workers in this part of the world. The study tool included HIV/AIDS questionnaire developed and validated by Carey MP & Morrison Beddy, D, Johnson B.T (1997). It comprised of 38 items related to mode of transmission, prevention and treatment. A total of 75 health workers participated in the study. Questionnaire was self-administered among Female Multipurpose Health workers (FMPHW), Nurses, Laboratory Technicians and class IV workers. Respondents were asked to put a circle for the responses in yes, no and don't know. Few items pertaining to general concept of the disease were low. The study revealed misconception regarding transmission of disease by some routes. Knowledge about prevention and treatment part was also low. We recommend intervention like ongoing training programme to sensitize the health worker. This would help to instill positive attitude and lesser discrimination in patient care as well as less stress and safer practices among them while dealing with such patients. Moreover the risk of occupational hazard will be minimized.

**Introduction:** It is a well-known fact that HIV/AIDS epidemic has emerged as one of the most serious and enormous health problems within two decades in India. Health care workers are at risk of infection with many infections like HIV and Hepatitis B and C in their day-to-day practice. These infections are preventable provided the workers have basic knowledge about these deadly infections. Besides, it can help them to take better care whenever they encounter such cases and also remove the stigma associated with it. Keeping in view the risk of occupational hazards due to inadequate knowledge and unsafe practices as per previous study. A study on awareness of HIV has been done among health workers of Leh Ladakh, which is a cold desert located in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

**Objective:** To assess the awareness about HIV/AIDS among health workers.

**Material and Method:** The study was conducted in the month of December 2015 among health workers of Khaltsi block. The block was selected randomly by lottery method among the existing three main blocks of the area. Prior permission was taken from the concerned Block Medical Officer as per the protocol. It comprised of 38 items related to mode of transmission, prevention and treatment. Study instrument included HIV/AIDS questionnaire developed and validated by Carey MP & Morrison Beddy, D, Johnson B.T (1997). A total of 75 health workers participated in the study. The questionnaire was self-administered among Female Multipurpose Health workers (FMPHW), Nurses, Laboratory Technicians and class IV workers. We excluded doctors from our study on the presumption of their better knowledge due to their academic qualification. Respondents were asked to put a circle for the responses in yes, no and don't know.

**Results and Discussion:** The first seven items in table 1 show the knowledge and perception of health workers

about HIV. 45.6% had an idea that HIV and AIDS are the same thing. 67.6% do not agree with the fact that AIDS is the cause of HIV. 60.3% deny the fact that a person with HIV can look and feel healthy. 17.6% felt that people infected with HIV quickly show signs of seriously being infected. 55.9% think that a person can be infected with HIV for 5 years or more without getting AIDS. Taking a test for HIV one week after having sex will tell a person if she or he has HIV has been quoted false by 47.1%.

**Table 1 : General Awareness about HIV**

Variables	True(%)	False(%)	Don't Know(%)
HIV and AIDS are same thing	45.6	52.9	1.5
AIDS is the cause of HIV	26.5	67.6	5.9
A person with HIV can look and feel healthy	36.8	60.3	2.9
People who are infected with HIV quickly show serious signs of being infected.	17.6	61.8	20.6
A Person can be infected with HIV for 5 years or more without getting AIDS.	55.9	17.6	26.5
Taking a test for HIV one week after having sex will tell a person if she or he has HIV	20.6	47.1	32.4

The variables in table 2 denote the awareness of health workers regarding the mode of transmission about HIV. Majority (96% to 47%) of the respondents gave correct responses regarding transmission from toilet seat, bite by mosquito, Taatoing, sharing glass of water, sitting in swimming pool, perinatal transmission, sexual transmission, blood transmission, multiple sexual partner, through sharing needles and respiratory infection. However there was misconception regarding transmission by kissing, sex through other routes and body secretions. Similar misconception have been re-

ported in a study by S Bhalla, H Chandwani et al.4As per the findings of J Sahayarani,Stanly Leo S et al, the mean score of knowledge about modes of transmission of HIV are low.5In contrast to the present findings,only 4.9 % and 8.9% cited perinatal and transmission by infected blood respectively.Mother to child transmission was known to 71.4% of care givers in a study conducted by LP Meena,SK Pandey et al.1 In another study by Naveen K Geol and Rahul Bansal6the common misconceptions about HIV/ AIDS among nursing students were that HIV transmission can also occur through hugging, sharing of toilet seats, towels, utensils, shaking hands and mosquito-bites.

Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of variables according to the means of prevention.17.6% had an idea that there is a cure for AIDS. Similarly,76 (21.2%) of the students had the

misconception that AIDS can be cured.22.1% cited that the virus can be killed by a bleach.while 82.4% had a misconception that eating healthy food can keep a person from getting HIV.Majority favours the use of latex , lambskin condom or rubber use as the best protection against HIV.Most of the respondents also felt that using a Vaseline or baby oil , taking vitamins and washing private parts cannot prevent the transmission of the virus.Regarding the treatment component, 66.2 % felt that a prophylactic vaccine can help in prevention of AIDS.45.6 % knew that vaccines are available for treatment of AIDS.73.5 % do not know whether taking an antibiotic can help in curing the infection.45.6% had no idea if douching after sex can help to prevent HIV.

**Table 2:Frequency distributon about modes of transmiision of HIV**

Variables	Yes(%)	No (%)	Don't know(%)
A Person can get HIV from a toilet seat	2.2	96.7	1.1
HIV can be spread by mosquitoes	18.9	74.4	6.7
A Person can get HIV by sharing a glass of water with someone who has HIV	11.1	78.9	10.0
It is possible to get HIV when a person gets a tattoo	67.8	17.8	14.4
A Pregnant woman with HIV can give the virus to her unborn baby	76.7	20	3.3
A Woman can get HIV if she has anal sex with a man	63.3	22.2	14.4
A person can get HIV by having oral sex,mouth to penis,with a man who has HIV.	38.9	44.4	16.7
A person can get HIV even if she or he has sex with another person only one time.	64.4	16.7	18.9
People are likely to get HIV by deep kissing, putting their tongue in their partners mouth,if their partner has HIV.	33.3	51.1	15.6
A person can get HIV by giving blood.	66.2	25.0	8.8
Having sex with more than one partner can increase a person's chance of being infected with HIV.	77.9	8.8	13.2

A person can get HIV by sitting in a hot tub or a swimming pool with a person who has HIV	5.6	78.5	15.9
A person can get HIV through contact with saliva, tears,sweat or urine.	19.1	69.1	11.8
A Person can get HIV from a woman's vaginal secretion.	82.5	4.2	13.3
A person can get HIV if having oral sex with a women	15.2	54.3	30.5
Atheletes who share needles when using steroids can get HIV from the needles.	83.8	1.5	14.7
Coughing and sneezing do not spread HIV	47.8	40	12.2

**Table 3:Awareness regarding Preventive methods and treatment of HIV.**

Variables	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know(%)
There is a cure for AIDS	17.6	75	7.4
HIV is killed by bleach	22.1	58.8	19.1
Eating healthy foods can keep a person from getting HIV	10.3	82.4	7.4
Using a latex condom or rubber can lower a person's chance of getting HIV	54.4	30.9	14.7
There is a vaccine that can stop adults from getting HIV	16.2	66.2	17.6
Some drugs have been made for the treatment of AIDS	45.6	30.9	23.5
Using a lambskin condom or rubber is the best protection against HIV	52.9	22.1	25
There is a female condom that can help decrease a woman's chance of getting HIV	51.5	16.2	32.4
A natural skin condom works better against HIV than does a latex condom	19.1	38.2	42.6
A person will not get HIV if he or she is taking antibiotics	9.2	17.3	73.5
Using Vaseline or baby oil with condom lowers the chance of getting HIV	8.8	60.3	30.9
Douching after sex will keep a woman from getting HIV	11.8	42.6	45.6
Taking vitamins keeps a person from getting HIV	13.2	70.6	16.2
Showering or washing one's private parts after sex keeps a person from getting HIV	20.6	58.1	20.6

**Conclusion and recommendation:** Our study found lack of awareness about the general concept of the disease, misconception regarding some component of modes of transmission in general and doubtful about the treatment and prevention part in particular .We emphasized the time to time sensitization of the health worker about this deadly disease through training programmes.This would in the long run contribute to lesser discrimination in patient care as well as less apprehension and safer practices among them while dealing with such patients.

**Limitation:** The study have been confined to a health workers of a single Block of the district.so its generalizability to the whole of workers of the area is question-

able. Further study with larger sample size with sampling frame from all the block would give a better picture about the gap in knowledge, attitude and practice.

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