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Knowledge Of Adolescent Girls Towards HIV/AIDS And Trends Of Sexual Behavior Among Adolescent Girls (Special Reference To Aurangabad City)

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Abstract:

HIV prevalence is estimated as 0.26% among the adults (15-49 years) in India as per the statistics of NACO-2015, and 50% of the burden shared in the epidemic by women. It is known that HIV is non curable infection in the human body today. Hence the only option is prevention. There are four roots mainly observed to transmitting HIV in human body are 1) Infected pregnant mother to her child 2) Sharing infected needle-syringe 3) Unprotected sexual relation with infected person and 4) infected blood transfusion. Big fraction of the HIV transmission is heterosexual (88%) in India. Sexual behaviour is related to the love, emotions, satisfaction and unresolved needs. The adolescent age is age of curiosity. Imbalance sexuality attract them to opposite sex or same sex also. Knowledge or awareness about the consequences of immature sexual behaviour may prevent the prevalence of HIV and STI. With this assumption the present paper explores the facts pertaining to knowledge among the adolescents belonging to socio economically backward strata. It is revealed that the adolescents under study though heard of the word HIV/AIDS, but ignorant about the causes, treatment and prevention of it. Further it is found that trends of immature sexual behaviour among adolescents belonging to 16 to 19 years old, seems profound. It is the matter of great concern in the light of government and non-government efforts for HIV/AIDS awareness.

Keywords: Adolescent, HIV Prevalence, Sexuality identification; STI/HIV infection;

1. Introduction:

A number of reasons make women more vulnerable than men¹. Looking to the drivers of the HIV epidemic men are prominently found more vulnerable than the women. It is observed that male-to-female transmission of HIV is more efficient than female-to-male transmission². In the Indian families most of the marital relationships men are older than women. Moreover they are dominant, authoritative and more powerful. As a result women are followers of them than decision makers. It is true in every sphere of life. Sexual life of the marital couples is not exceptions for it. Hence it is said that there are more chances of the women being infected by their partners. Therefore, women's vulnerability to HIV is wide-spread.

It is known that HIV is non curable infection in the human body today. Hence the only option remains as its prevention that is reducing the risk of infection. It is ensured by delaying the age of first sexual encounter. It is now commonly observed that girls are involving in the intercourse neither willingly nor with consent. Sexual abuse of young women and girls working in fields is witnessed. Teen marriage remains a reality in many parts of India. Most women in sex work say that they were led up while in their teen age³. Whether it is marriage, sex work, or consensual sex, it is important to delay age of sexual act. At the teen age women are more immature for facing reproductive tract infections, and it is more vulnerable the women are to interact with HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Prevalence of HIV/AIDS among adults in India (15 -49 years) is estimated as 0.26% stated by NACO technical report in 2015. Maharashtra has shown greater prevalence as compared to the data of the national level. The total number of people living with HIV in India is estimated as 21.17 lakhs among which Maharashtra accompanied with 3.01 lakhs in 2015. Children (< 15 years) account for 6.54%, while two fifth (40.5%) of total HIV infections are among females.⁴ Hence the HIV/AIDS have become a major health problem in India.

If at all to combat this burning epidemic the pace of reduction new HIV infections is necessary which can be achieved only by way of increasing the awareness among the potential groups. Hence the present paper focuses upon the prevalence of knowledge with regard to HIV/AIDS among the adolescent girls. It is also highlighting the facts pertaining to first sexual encounter among the adolescent girls under study. Hence the objectives of this paper may be stated as below:

2. Objectives:

1. To find out awareness about HIV /AIDS among adolescent girls.
2. To understand opinion of adolescent girls about preventive measures for safe sex practice.
3. To assess the awareness and knowledge regarding sexually transmitted infections.
4. To know the extent of first sexual encounter among the adolescent girls under study.

3. Study Areas, Sample Selection And Data Analysis:

The sample selected for the present study was by probability as well as non-probability sampling. For selection of area, the cluster sampling of probability type was used, while from the selected area the individuals for the study were selected by the chain sampling which comes under non probability sampling. Out of the five zones of Aurangabad city i.e. east, west, south,north and central, one zone was selected by lottery method which is east Aurangabad, comprised of the location named Ram Nagar, Munkundwadi , Raj Nagar, Bharat Nagar,Vishranti Nagar, AhilaybaiHolkar Chock, Jai Bhavani Nagar, Thakre Nagar, Lokshahi Nagar etc. Since the researcher could not get the exact statistics either from the competent organizations of the localities, the population of the study cannot be figured out. However the data of the adolescent girls of five zones of Aurangabad city was around 74,000 (73,928)⁵ which is on an average 15000 per zone. Considering this figure 150 adolescent girls which is 10% representation of east zone of Aurangabad were selected for present study.

Data collection was conducted using a standardized interview schedule containing both open and close ended questions. The interview schedule included the questions on socio-economic and demographic characteristics (e.g. age, religion, area of residence, level of education, socio- economic background, family structure, etc.) of respondents. Also questions related to awareness about HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infection and details of first sexual encounter were constituted. To supplementthe quantitative data, qualitative data was also collected from respondents.

Since questions are directly focusing upon the awareness, knowledge and perceptions regarding sexually transmitted infection and HIV /AIDS, special efforts were made for rapport building with the group and then sought the valid data pertaining to topic under study.

4. Personal Profile Of The Respondents:

Out of 150 respondents, 79.3 % were between the age group of 13 to 18 years while 14.6% were above 19 years old and 6% between 10-12 years of age. Hence majority of the respondents were in the core group of adolescents. As far as their mother tongue is concerned 80.6 % were Marathi speakers and 19.3% were Hindi speakers. With regard to religious affiliation 60% of respondents were belonging to Hindu, 36.6% were Buddhist and less than 4% were Muslims (3.3 %).

5. Family Background:

The family background of the respondents shows that 78% were belonging to worker's families. Remaining 22% respondent's father were engaged in public sector of service. The residential area of the respondents cannot be labelled fully as slum, rather it is the area names as "Gunthewari" which is definitely upgraded from the slums.

While asked about the education, 85% respondent's studying in co-education system while 15% adolescent girls have discontinued their education. Thus, study sample covers the drop out as well as the regular students of middle and higher secondary education. Of course the school going were in majority. Further it is found that 56% of respondents were known the use of information technology through using computers, which is quite dominating to 44% of respondents who were not used to operate this technology.

6. Awareness And Knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS:

The study group was asked the set of questions ranges from ever heard about the HIV/AIDS to till first sexual encounter. In this regard, 76% respondents were knew about the word HIV/AIDS while 24% respondents were not even heard about HIV/AIDS and they were not knowing the HIV is also a kind of STI.

Further it was found that 40.6% respondents were not knowing the difference between HIV and AIDS while 31.3% affirmed that the HIV and AIDS are the same and only 28% respondents expressed that these are not the same terms. HIV/AIDS is taboo subject in Indian society hence the lack of proper and scientific information among the majority adolescents, under study is found (72%)

7. Knowledge About Causes Of HIV/AIDS

Regarding the knowledge about route of transmission 36% respondents were expressed that they didn't have any information about the HIV/AIDS transmission and 27.3 % respondents were knew only two causes of HIV transmission i.e. by way of infected mother to child and infected blood. While 36.6% respondents were knew the four appropriate reasons of HIV transmission i.e. Unprotected sex, infected mother to child transmission, HIV infected blood and HIV infected syringe. Hence it clearly seems that 63.3% of the respondents were unaware about unprotected sex and infected syringe as the main cause of HIV transmission.

It was noticed that respondents belonging to fifteen to nineteen years were aware about the four causes of HIV transmission. This awareness was likely to be built up by way of either media or by text book.

8. Awareness About HIV Treatment And Prevention Methods:

Response to the knowledge about treatment for HIV was found that 44% respondents stated it is noncurable and 34% confessed that they were unaware whether it is curable or not, remaining 22% had in the impression that HIV is curable disease. The response was received to whether HIV is curable or not? Here also it was clearly indicates that above 50% of the respondents were unaware about the treatment of HIV/AIDS (56%). When asked about the details of treatment on HIV/AIDS, 80% respondents were not aware about the Anti retro viral treatment (ART) while 13% were not answered to this question only 7% respondents were aware about the treatment but failed to explain exact name of treatment. Thus, almost all adolescents under study were unaware about the treatment of HIV/AIDS

When investigator asked about the preventive measures of the HIV/AIDS 36% were mentioned that Condom is the trusted way of prevention but remarkable number of respondents (64%) found the lack of information on prevention. It is observed that while answering the question all the respondents were hesitate.

With regard to vulnerability of acceleration of HIV transmission, investigator assessed the knowledge about the Sexually Transmitted Infections and Reproductive Tract Infections, 83.6% were not aware about the STI/RTI while 16.3% respondents were aware about STI's and RTI's. Even RTI is commonly found among the women but still the awareness and knowledge was poor among the adolescents.

9. Sexual Behavior:

Adolescence is characterized by opposite sex attraction when asked about this, 49.3% respondents confessed that they are attracted towards opposite sexes, while 50.6% respondents expressed that they did not feel attraction about the opposite sex. Further asked about whether the opposite sex persons proposed them, 16% respondents showed positive response to this question while 39.3% reported that they did not received any proposal from the opposite sex persons, remaining 44.6% did not responded to this question. Those who have received proposal from boys (16%) 6% among them accepted it, where as 10% rejected. Further it was asked whether they faced any demand for sex, 4.6% respondents stated that they faced such demand and out of these 2% have experienced about the sex activity. Tough at present the percentage seems less but it would turn out into big number if ignored. This result is supported by one of the study conducted by Varma , titled as :Risky Sexual Behavior” in 1997,the same has highlighted that pre-marital sex is not uncommon and that young people often lack adequate information in order to protect themselves from Sexually transmitted infections/diseases and unwanted pregnancies.

10. Conclusion:

By and large the adolescents under study were aware about the word of HIV/AIDS but remarkable respondents were unaware about its causes, treatment and preventive measures. However it is seen the demand of better information than that they possess regarding to the STI/RTIs. Last but not least to express that the adolescents now are showing trends in premarital sex which demands a serious thought and urgent intervention. In the light of various government and non-government efforts to combat on this issue, still sex among adolescents before marriage seems to be continued. Hence greater prevention is required to change the avoiding the safer sex practice in consideration of safer age. It is also help to averting the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS in The Indian reproductive age group.

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