

KNOWLEDGE ON HIV/AIDS AMONGST BUS DRIVERS OF DHULIKHEL, NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: One of the growing epidemics in the world today is HIV/AIDS. In the cities with high mobility, bus drivers and transport workers are considered as the risk group for HIV/AIDS. In Kavre district, the increased mobility along with Araniko highway and Banepa Bardibas highways has drastically increased the vulnerabilities of younger populations in particularly to HIV/AIDS and STDs. Most of these young people do not have access to information, condoms, supportive services which enable them to have safer sex.

Methodology: A descriptive cross sectional study was done to assess knowledge about HIV/AIDS among bus drivers of Dhulikhel.

Results: After the analysis and interpretation of the data, study revealed that majority of the respondents i.e. 38% (n=19) were between age 20-24 years. Among them vast majority of the respondents i.e 82% (n=41) have heard from media (radio, Television and newspapers). Regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS 90% (n=45) of the respondents mentioned that unsafe sex is the means of transmission. Still 24% (n=12) believe that sharing clothes and 2% (n=1) believe that kissing can transmit HIV/AIDS. As per prevention measures 90% (n=5) have the knowledge that using condom during sexual intercourse can prevent HIV/AIDS. 8% (n=4) of the respondents still believe that HIV/AIDS is curable and rest of them i.e. 92% (n=46) of the respondents knew that HIV/AIDS is not curable.

Conclusion: The present study strongly recommends that there is immediate need of program to create awareness of public motor drivers and co-workers, vulnerable youths and other high risk groups of people including migrant populations.

Key words: Drivers, HIV/AIDS, Knowledge

INTRODUCTION

HIV/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) remains a public health problem of major significance in most parts of the world. In 2009, there were an estimated 2.6 million [2.3 million–2.8 million] people who became newly infected

with HIV.1 Nepal is experiencing transition of HIV epidemic. Various predisposing factors are prevalent for the rapid spread of HIV in Nepal. Poverty, ignorance, and conflict are the root causes in undertaking high-risk behavior. 2 HIV thrives on mobile population. Kavrepalanchowk district of Nepal is center for the migrant of young population because this district is in proximity to Kathmandu valley and it has relatively extensive road networks. This along with the increased mobility along Araniko highway and Banepa Bardibas highways has drastically increased the vulnerabilities of younger populations in Kavre particularly to HIV/AIDS and STDs. Thus the influence population

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of these highways, public motor drivers and co-workers, workers of body building workshops, workers of hotels and restaurants where hidden flesh trade exist increases the high risk of spreading HIV/AIDS. All these circumstances favor the district in wider spreads of HIV infection among new population. Hence the present study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among the risk group and expected that the findings of the present study will be beneficial to design appropriate preventive strategies.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out to assess the knowledge about HIV/AIDS among Bus drivers of Dhulikhel-Kathmandu route. 50 drivers were randomly selected for the study. A pretested questionnaire was administered to assess the knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Verbal consent was taken from all the participants prior of collecting the information and privacy were maintained during data collection. Data was collected through close ended questionnaire and interview method was done to collect the data.

RESULTS

Among the participants all 100% (n=50) of the participant were male. Majority of the respondents i.e 38% (n=19) were between age 20-24 years. 62% (n=31) of the respondents had secondary level of schooling. As per ethnicity 60% (n=30) of respondents were Newars followed by Tamang, Chhetri and Brahmin as shown in table 1. 100% (n=50) respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS. Among them vast majority of the respondents i.e 82% (n=41) have heard from media (radio, Television and newspapers). 12% of them (n=6) have heard from health worker and rest of them i.e 4% (n=2) have heard from friends. 98% (n=49) of the respondents knew that HIV/AIDS is a communicable disease. Regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS 90% (n=45) of the respondents mentioned that unsafe sex is the means of transmission, 100% (n=50) of the respondents mentioned that sharing of the needles, 92% (n=46) mentioned that transfusion of the blood and 90% (n=45) of the respondents mentioned that HIV

transmits from pregnant mother to fetus. However still 24% (n=12) believe that sharing clothes and 2% (n=1) believe that kissing can transmit HIV/AIDS as shown in table 2. 98% (n=48) respondents believe that having STDS and intravenous drug users are the risk group for HIV/AIDS. As per prevention measures 90% (n=45) have the knowledge that using condom during sexual intercourse can prevent HIV/AIDS. rest of them i.e. 10% (n=5) don't know that using condom can prevent HIV/AIDS. 8% (n=4) of the respondents still believe that HIV/AIDS is curable and rest of them i.e 92% (n=46) of the respondents knew that HIV/AIDS is not curable.

Table 1. Demographic characteristic of the respondents

Sex	Frequency(n)	Percentage
Male	50	100%
Female	0	0%
Age		
15-19 years	4	8%
20-24 years	19	38%
25-29 years	13	26%
>30 years	14	28%
Ethnicity		
Newar	30	60%
Tamang	8	16%
Brahmin/Chhetri	12	24%
Educational Status		
Primary level	19	38%
Secondary level	31	62%
Higher secondary and above	0	0%

Table 2. Knowledge regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS

Mode of Transmission	Knowledge	Percentage
Unsafe sex	Yes	45(90)%
	No	5(10)%
Pregnant mother to fetus	Yes	45(90)%
	No	5(10)%
Sharing of infected needle	Yes	50(100)%
	No	0(0)%
Sharing of cloths	Yes	12(24)%
	No	24(76)%
Kissing	Yes	1(2)%
	No	49(98)%

DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis of present study of 50 bus drivers from Dhulikhel revealed that all the respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS, however knowledge about modes of transmission and methods of prevention are still inadequate. As per our study 100% (n=50) respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS. Our study was supported by the study done in India amongst the truck drivers which revealed that (97.2%) truck drivers were aware of HIV/AIDS.³ As per our findings, regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS 90% (n=45) of the respondents mentioned that unsafe sex is the means of transmission, 100% (n=50) of the respondents mentioned that sharing of the needles, 92% (n=46) mentioned that transfusion of the blood and 90% (n=45) of the respondents mentioned that HIV transmits from pregnant mother to fetus. It infers that most respondents knew that HIV/AIDS can be transmitted through sexual intercourse, sharing of needles, blood transfusion and from mother to fetus. Our study finding is supported by the finding of Chaturvedi et al³ who revealed that 94.6% of the drivers were aware that HIV can be transmitted by heterosexual route, 86.2% were aware about transmission by contaminated needle and 84.4% were aware about transmission by blood transfusion. Likewise the study done in West Indies amongst taxi drivers revealed that 76.7% of them were aware of the various modes of transmission and 73.3% were knowledgeable about risk of contracting the infection. Several misconceptions about transmission were recorded in our study. Misconceptions as regards to transmission of HIV/AIDS by sharing of clothes, kissing were present among bus drivers. Our study revealed that still 24% (n=12) believe that sharing clothes and 2% (n=1) believe that kissing can transmit HIV/AIDS. Chaudhry et al⁵ also reported the misconception among the drivers. As per their findings forty to fifty percent of respondents had the misconception that AIDS can be contracted by casual contact and being in the same room with a person with AIDS. Misconceptions as regards to transmission of HIV/AIDS by mosquito bite and using public toilet were present among

truck drivers. The prevalence of misconceptions among these workers is probably due to their low educational status. These misconceptions can lead to increased discrimination against patients of HIV/AIDS. These misconceptions need to be addressed through AIDS intervention programmes as it has implications for wrong attitudes towards people living with AIDS in the community. HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for this group of workers should focus on eliminating these misconceptions and include specific interventions to effect a change in sexual behaviour in order to reduce the risk of transmission of the disease in the community.

The electronic media and news paper have been reported as the commonest source of information about HIV/AIDS. Our study has revealed that mass media has played an important role in spreading the message about HIV/AIDS. In our study it was observed that 82% of the drivers had gained the knowledge about HIV/AIDS from TV, radio and newspapers. Like wise the study done in Tanzania amongst the bus drivers revealed that 93.9% of the respondents have heard about HIV/AIDS from the media particularly radios, televisions and newspapers.⁶ Our finding is consistent with the findings of Chaturvedi et al³ who reported that 67% truck drivers had gained the knowledge about HIV/AIDS from TV, radio and newspapers. Like wise the study done in India amongst truck drivers revealed that 67.28% got information from mass media.³

As per prevention measures 90% (n=45) have the knowledge that using condom during sexual intercourse can prevent HIV/AIDS, rest of them i.e. 10% (n=5) don't know that using condom can prevent HIV/AIDS. The finding of the study done in Tanzania supports the finding of our study where 75.5% of the drivers believe that using condom can prevent HIV/AIDS.⁶

As per our study 8% (n=4) of the respondents still believe that HIV/AIDS is curable. Likewise the study done amongst automobile workers in Nigeria revealed that (16%) thought that HIV/AIDS can be cured by modern medicine.⁷

CONCLUSION

Being the sexually active age group and frequent mobility, drivers are epidemiologically important risk group as far as transmission of HIV infection is concerned. Thus, their knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS is of paramount importance to protect these drivers. Knowledge on the transmission of HIV/AIDS and means of prevention needs to be articulated to them. Though they have been targeted by IEC campaigns there still exist major lacunae in their knowledge regarding transmission of HIV/AIDS and means of prevention as brought out by this study. To overcome these lacunae there is an immediate need of program to create awareness of public motor drivers and co-workers, vulnerable youths and other high risk groups of people including migrant populations. The study gives some direction for prospective studies assessing the knowledge and attitude of bus drivers and co-workers, vulnerable youths and other high risk groups of people including migrant populations.

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