ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Received 4th April, 2018
Received in revised form 25th May, 2018
Accepted 18th June, 2018
Published online 28th July, 2018

Key Words:
HIV/AIDS, Dental students, Knowledge, attitude

ABSTRACT

Aim; To investigate a group of dental students’ knowledge about HIV infection, attitudes towards treating HIV/AIDS patients and behaviour practices.

Materials and methods: study population consisted of 180 dental students from BabuBanarasi Das College of Dental Sciences, Lucknow. Who were treating patients in the clinics of the college? They were divided into 3 group’s undergraduate students, post graduate students and intern. Standardized questionnaire was prepared and questions were based on 3 groups, i.e. knowledge and awareness, clinical manifestations of HIV and diagnosis & prognosis.

Results; out of 180 participants, majority had good knowledge regarding modes of HIV transmission, most of them willing to work and assist patients with HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion; the findings suggest that although students had good knowledge about HIV/AIDS, their attitude towards treating these patients was negative because of fear of transmission of this HIV infection to them.

INTRODUCTION

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a globally emerging public health problem, caused by human immune deficiency virus [HIV]. HIV attacks the immune system by destroying CD4 positive T cells. India alone accounts for over 2.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS with a prevalence of 0.91% [1,2]. The risk of occupational transmission of the virus from a patient to a health care provider has been estimated at 0.3% after a single percutaneous exposure to HIV infected blood [1]. The medical staff, in particular doctors and dentists who are directly in contact with the body fluids of patients, are at an increased risk of HIV/AIDS [3]. According to the world health organization [WHO] HIV-positive patients should be treated, but some dentists are reluctant to treat HIV/AIDS patients because of lack of knowledge and ignorance about the disease [4]. A sound knowledge is the key to develop right attitude in treating such patients. All dental students should have complete knowledge about the universal precautions to control the spread of HIV infection [2]. Keeping this in view, a study was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude of dental students towards HIV/AIDS.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The HIV/AIDS awareness and knowledge of dental Students was assessed by means of a questionnaire. A validated questionnaire comprising of 24 questions was designed which was inclusive of both open and close ended questions relating to risk factors, modes of transmission, clinical appearance and diagnosis of HIV/AIDS. The survey was conducted among dental students in a college of North India.

The study sample was divided into 3 groups

1. Group 1; final year students: 60
2. Group 2; interns: 48
3. Group 3; PG students: 38

Statistical analysis was performed using statistical package of social sciences [SPSS] software, version 16.0.

Scores of knowledge items were summoned to obtain the percentage.

RESULTS

The study was conducted on 146 dental students, out of which 60 students were studying in final year dental course, 48 students were doing internship and 38 students were doing
Discussion

The results of my study revealed various startling facts about the knowledge, awareness, and attitude of dental students towards HIV/AIDS.

In our study, we found that majority of interns and postgraduate students had good knowledge with respect to mode of transmission when compared to final year students. [The findings are superior when compared to study done in South Africa by Cohen et al.]

88.3% of final year students, 81.7% of post graduate students are willing to assist or work with operative procedures on patients with HIV/AIDS when compared to intern [52%]. Most of the students are aware that use of same dental instruments from infected persons can spread HIV/AIDS and also they agree that HIV/AIDS patients cannot be identified by their physical appearance.

More than 80% of the students in all the three groups know that risk of HIV transmission more after needle prick injury-accordance to study done by Chauhan et al.

Awareness about the rapid HIV antibody test as a screening test for HIV found be significant in group 1 [70%] as compared to group 2 [43.7%] and group 3 [68.4%]. When asked about the confirmatory western blot test, results got more correct response 78.3% in group 1, 66.6% in group 2 and 78.9% in group 3. Maximum number of students in group 1 and 3 had good knowledge that no vaccination is available for prevention of HIV/AIDS; but in group 2 [43.75%] students claimed the availability of a vaccine that protect against HIV.

Regarding precautionary measures, the overall knowledge of all the students was found to be average, as 60% of them are unaware that latex gloves could provide protection against accidental exposure to HIV infection. Regarding the place of first referral of HIV patients after confirmation of HIV positive status is antiretroviral therapy [ART] centre was known to be 60% in group 1, 29.1% group 2 and 55.2% in group 3. [These findings differ from previous study by T RajuRagavendra et al].

Conclusion

The overall knowledge of students about HIV/AIDS was adequate regarding mode of transmission, and most of them will to work or assist in patients with HIV infection, but there were inadequacies in infection control measures. So our efforts have been successful in spreading awareness among dental students and reducing the fear among them when managing HIV positive patients.

References


---

**How to cite this article:**


*******