

Effectiveness of Educational Intervention on Knowledge & Attitude about MTP Act 1971 among Apparently Healthy Reproductive Age Group Population Visiting A Tertiary Care Centre, Puducherry

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Abstract

Medical termination of Pregnancy Act is one such Act which was brought by the Indian Government to streamline the process of abortions conducted in India. Its rules were framed for the first time in 1972, amended in 1975, 1977, 2003, and 2009 and recently in October 2014. The main motive of passing such bills was to decrease the female foeticide rate, decrease the maternal mortality rate, improve the health of the mother and the newborn and to avoid unwanted and illegal abortion practises. In spite of these measures from the government, more than 5000 deaths due to unsafe abortions take place every year in our country. The main cause of such death related to abortion is mainly due to the ignorance of the general public towards abortion. Majority of the women, not only in the rural parts, but also in the urban regions does not know about the mere existence of the MTP law. Hence this study was aimed to estimate the level of awareness about the MTP Act among the apparently healthy reproductive age group public, visiting the hospital and apart from it, we also educate them regarding the MTP Act and its uses. Among our participants the minimum age reported was 20 and the maximum age was 45. Out of total 220, female accounted to 63.2% and male 36.8%. Among them married people accounted for 69.5%, unmarried 28.2% and others were 2.3%. 42.3% of people had history of abortion their family but 64% of people doesn't know whether the conducted abortion was a legal or a illegal one. Eleven questions were asked to the participants and an initial assessment of their knowledge was done with the help of a questionnaire. After this immediately, educational intervention was carried out about the law and after a gap period of one month the participants were asked the same questions as before using telecommunication device and their knowledge was tested.

Key Words: MTP Act, Abortion, Educational intervention, Knowledge & Attitude.

Introduction

Many acts & bills are constantly passed and amended respectively for the welfare of the people of India, but the real question is whether these acts and laws reach the people concerned? Medical termination of Pregnancy Act is one such Act which was brought by the Indian Government to streamline the process of abortions conducted in India. Its rules were framed for the first time in 1972, amended in 1975, 1977, 2003, and 2009 and recently in October 2014⁽¹⁾. The main motive

of passing such bills is to decrease the female foeticide rate, to decrease the maternal mortality rate, improve the health of the mother and the newborn and to avoid unwanted and illegal abortion practises.

In spite of these measures from the government to reduce the maternal mortality rates, female foeticide and other illegal abortion deaths, more than 5000 deaths due to unsafe abortions take place every year in our country⁽²⁾. Unsafe abortions are killing one woman every two hours in India. A lancet paper in 2007 reported

that there were 6.4 million abortions, out of which 3.6 million (56%) were unsafe. According to census 2011 abortions taking place in institutions varies from 32.0% in Chhattisgarh to 73.9% in Assam^(3,4,5).

The main causes of such deaths related to abortions are mainly due to the ignorance of the general public towards the Abortion procedures carried out in India. Majority of the women not only in the rural parts, but also in the urban regions does not know about the mere existence of the law. This ignorance related to abortion like, when it has to be conducted, the indications, the place, who has to conduct the procedure etc....remain unknown to them. Hence this study is aimed to estimate the level of awareness about the MTP Act among the apparently healthy public visiting the hospital and apart from it, we also educate them regarding the MTP Act and its uses.

Materials and Method

This is a quasi experimental study / Before-after intervention study, carried out in the medicine Out Patient Department (OPD) of Sri Venkateshwaraa Medical College Hospital and Research Center, where on an average of 75 patients visit OPD per day. The sample size was 220. Sampling Procedure followed was that all the eligible participants available during the study period were included in the study.

Inclusion Criteria:

- The study subjects are those who are apparently healthy people who accompany the patients to the Medicine OPD.
- They may be a relative/friend/guardian, irrespective of the sex.
- Age group of 15 – 45yrs, of either gender.
- Who own/ use telecommunication devices

Exclusion Criteria:

- Persons less than 15 years and more than 45 years will not be included in the study.
- Persons who don't have telecommunication devices or who don't know to use one will not be included in the study.

We assumed that 20 eligible participants will be available at the OPD, each day during the visit of the

investigator.

Phase I: The investigator visited Medicine OPD on all days from Monday-Friday. A pre-tested self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection after obtaining informed written consent. Contact numbers of the study participants was collected. The study participants were given educational intervention on MTP Act, 1971. In this educational intervention, all the details like the latest updates, the merits and usefulness of the MTP Act was explained to them. Informative charts, attractive and thought provoking PPTs presentations were used as a tool to educate them.

Phase II: One month after the intervention period, the study participants were contacted through phone and post intervention assessment was done. Pre and Post test results were analysed using SPSS 23.0

Study tool and study variables: A pre-tested self-designed questionnaire comprising two parts will be used for data collection. **Part A- Socio demographic details** (Age, gender, education, occupation, income, marital status, religion, number of children, use of contraceptives, obstetric index.) **Part B-** The Investigator will assess the knowledge and attitude by using structured questionnaire regarding MTP Act 1971.

Observation and Results

Distribution of the study population based on age is shown in table 1. The minimum age reported was 20 and the maximum age was 45. Distribution of study population based on gender and education is shown in table 2. In this study female participants accounted for 63.2% and male 36.8%. Among the total participants, 77.4% of people have completed high school and have graduated and 8.6% of people have never attended even primary school. Distribution of study population based on socio – economic status is shown in table 3. Modified Kuppusamy scale was used to assess the socio-economic status and based on this 64% of people are middle and above middle class with maximum number of people fall under upper middle class 37.7%. Out of 220, 93 participants reported past history of abortion and among them 67 doesn't know whether it was a legal or an illegal abortion (Table4). While analysing the pre and post test results, majority of the persons have answered many of the post intervention questions correctly and overall it was statistically significant for all the questions. Pre and post test results and analysis is shown in table 5.

Table 1: Distribution of Study population based on (n=220)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
AGE	220	20	45	32.8	7.3

Table 2: Distribution of study population based on gender & education (n=220)

Gender	Frequency (%)
Male	81(36.8%)
Female	139(63.2%)
Education	
Professional, PG & Above	33(15.0)
Graduation	49(22.3)
Intermediate or Post High school	43(19.5)
High school Certification	46(20.9)
Middle school Certification	14(6.4)
Primary school Certification	16(7.3)
Non literate	19(8.6)

Table 3: Distribution of study population based on socio economic status (n=220)

Socio Economic Status	Frequency (%)
Lower	21(9.5)
Upper Lower	58(26.4)
Lower Middle	41(18.6)
Upper Middle	83(37.7)
Upper	17(7.7)

Table 4: Distribution of Study population based on past history of abortion& the type of abortion (n=220)

Past history of abortion	Frequency (%)
No History	127(57.7)
Once	61(27.7)
Twice	23(10.5)
Thrice	9(4.1)
Type of abortion	
Not Applicable	127(57.7)
Legal	10(4.5)
Illegal	16(7.3)
Don't know	67(30.5)

Table 5: Distribution and analysis of the pre and post test answers (n=220)

Question Number	Frequency (Percentage)				P Value
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	
1	58 (26.4)	0	162 (73.6)	NA	0.001*
P1	216 (98.2)	0	4(1.8)	NA	
2	62 (28.2)	158 (71.8)	NA	NA	0.001*
P2	216 (93.1)	4 (6.9)	NA	NA	
3	20 (9.1)	48 (21.8)	152 (69.1)	NA	0.001*
P3	177 (80.5)	2 (0.9)	41 (18.6)	NA	
4	13 (5.9)	37 (16.8)	170 (77.3)	NA	0.000*
P4	143 (65.0)	71 (32.3)	6 (2.7)	NA	
5	119 (54.1)	84 (38.2)	17 (7.7)	NA	0.000*
P5	193 (87.7)	27 (12.3)	0	NA	
6	42 (19.1)	130 (59.1)	48 (21.8)	NA	0.001*
P6	202 (91.9)	12 (8.1)	0	NA	
7	203 (92.3)	0	17 (7.7)	NA	0.000*
P7	24 (10.9)	155 (70.5)	41 (18.6)	NA	
8	124 (56.4)	0	96 (43.6)	NA	0.000*
P8	5 (2.3)	182 (82.7)	33 (15.0)	NA	
9	43 (19.5)	93 (42.3)	62 (28.2)	22 (10)	0.000*
P9	4 (1.8)	2 (0.9)	46 (20.9)	168 (76.4)	
10	34 (15.5)	50 (22.7)	38 (17.3)	98 (44.5)	0.000*
P10	199 (90.5)	21 (9.5)	0	0	
11	141 (64.1)	22 (10)	57 (27.9)	NA	0.000*
P11	19 (8.6)	191(86.8)	19(8.6)	NA	

P – Post test questions NA – Not Applicable * - Statistically Significant

Discussion

This study was conducted among reproductive age group individuals of either sex in a tertiary medical college in Puducherry. The total numbers of participants were 220. Among the participants, the minimum age reported was 20 and the maximum age was 45. Mean age group participated 33. In this study female participants accounted for 63.2% and male 36.8%. Among the total participants, 77.4% of people have completed

high school and have graduated and 8.6% of people have never attended even primary school. The basic demographic details were collected to avoid the bias in the study subjects. Equivalent to females, males also play a major role in decision making with relation to conduct of abortion. This was the reason both male and female were included in this study were as in the study conducted in Kerala⁽⁶⁾ as well as in South Africa⁽⁷⁾, only females were included but the awareness study

conducted in New Delhi⁽⁸⁾, both male and female were included. In this study both rural and urban people were included and more than 75% of people have completed their schooling and also some under graduate courses. All the other studies also included both rural and urban population.

When compared to all the three studies which have evaluated the knowledge aspect alone of the people, in this study we have evaluated about their self experience about the abortion and their knowledge in it. Among the participants, 127 people had no personal history or family history of abortion. 93 participants reported either personal history or a family history of abortion. Among the 93, 67 participants don't know the type (legal or illegal) of abortion conducted. 10 persons reported as legal, done in a hospital set up and 16 reported as illegal, done in home.

Regarding the awareness of MTP Act, the pre intervention answers denote that the public are totally unaware of the mere existence of such an act in India. The same conclusion was driven from the studies conducted in Kerala⁽⁶⁾, South Africa⁽⁷⁾ & New Delhi⁽⁸⁾. All the three studies conducted only a survey regarding the awareness of the act among them, but we also conducted an educational intervention. We also evaluated the knowledge of the public by contacting them through phone after a period of one month and re evaluated them with the set of same questionnaire. Each question was evaluated for pre and post intervention and for all the questions, they have mostly answered correctly and upon analysing statistically, all the 11 post intervention answers were statistically significant.

The first question was about the knowledge of mere existence of the MTP Act in which 26.4% gave correct answer in the initial test, while 98.2% gave correct answers after the educational intervention. The second question was about the awareness on MTP Act in which initially 28.2% gave the correct answer, while after 93.1% gave the correct answers. The third to sixth questions were regarding the termination of a pregnancy with respect to mother, baby, rape and contraception failure. In these the initial percentage of correct answers were 9.1%, 5.9%, 54.1 & 19.1% respectively, while the post intervention answers were 80.5%, 65%, 87.7% & 91.9% respectively. The seventh question was on husbands' consent, the eighth & ninth was on doctors qualification, the tenth was on gestation week for termination and the eleventh was regarding hospitals for

MTP. Initially the percentage of correct answers were 0%, 0%, 10%, 15.5% & 10% respectively, while after educational intervention it was 70.5%, 82.7%, 76.4%, 90.5% and 86.8% respectively.

Conclusion

A study to assess the effectiveness of educational intervention on knowledge & attitude about MTP Act 1971 among apparently healthy reproductive age group population visiting a tertiary care centre, Puducherry was carried out, in which the following observation was made:

- The minimum age of participant reported was 20 and the maximum age was 45 with a mean age of 33.
- Female participants accounted for 63.2% and male 36.8%. Among the total participants, 77.4% of people have completed high school and have graduated and 8.6% of people have never attended even primary school.
- Analysing the socio economic status, 64% of people are middle and above middle class with maximum number of people fall under upper middle class 37.7%.
- 93 participants reported past history of abortion and among them 67 doesn't know whether it was a legal or an illegal abortion.
- Analysing the pre and post test results, majority of the persons have answered many of the post intervention questions correctly and overall it was statistically significant for all the eleven questions
- The results were that, there is a need to expand awareness about when, where and under what circumstances legal abortion can be availed. This awareness was poor not only among women but also among the gatekeepers of the decision making process in the family as well. Women also need to know their rights and study concluded that they should also know, what are safe quality services, in order to ask for information or question poor quality care Providers
- From this study we like to expose to the government about the lack of knowledge of the general public about the MTP Act.
- We believe the knowledge which we feed them about the MPT Act 1972 will help them know the correct methods and indications and provide them overall

knowledge about illegal abortions.

Conflict of Interest: Nil

Source of Funding: Nil

Ethical Clearance: The study was approved by the Ethics committee of the institute.

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