

Knowledge and Attitude about Sexual Transmitted Disease among Women in Reproductive Age in Al-Nasiriyah Governorate-Iraq

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Abstract

Background: Sexually transmitted diseases are group of disease primarily affecting sexually active population and has led to a major public health problem in the reproductive age group (15-45 years), which are largely acquired through sexual act or close contact with genitals leading to potentially devastating effects.

Objectives: To assess knowledge and attitude about sexual transmitted disease among women in reproductive age in Al-Nasiriyah governorate-Iraq.

Methods: Cross sectional study design based on community was conducted in in Al-Nasiriyah governorate in Iraq on women at reproductive age. Data collected by predesigned and pretested instrument through face to face interview.

Results: In general literates women were more aware about STDs compared to illiterates. A total of 180 women at reproductive age were recorded, of which 325(64%) regard blood transfusion as major method of STD transmission and 206(40%) Through the open wound of the genitals. 384 (68.3%) women told that vaginal discharge is common symptom, followed by Genital and mouth ulcers 194(34.5%). 310(61%) women regard diagnosis of STD done by blood test.396(78%) opined abortion common complication followed by 287(55%) infertility. 404(71%) opined that STDs can be prevented by abstinence from sex and 343(61%) it cannot be prevented.

Conclusions: Based on the results of the study, women's knowledge about sexual transmitted diseases that transmitted during sex is very low, so special programs must be provided for women that can increase knowledge of women and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases in Iraq and published on television and radio. As knowledge and awareness of diseases promote with education, special educational programs are also effective for education of women in Iraq about STD.

Key words: Knowledge, Attitude, STD, Reproductive age women, Al-Nasiriyah

Introduction

Sexual transmitted diseases (STDS) are diseases caused by either virus, parasite, or bacteria, which transmitted mostly through sexual contact involving oral, vaginal and anal sex. STD also can transmitted by non-sexual methods as by blood, blood product or from mother to child through pregnancy and delivery¹. Women at reproductive age especially are mentally and physical and society more vulnerable to infections

in reproductive tract (RTIs) and STDs. There are at least 25 respiratory tract infections (RTIs and/or) STDs with a range of different clinical features and these diseases disease during anal, vaginal, and oral sex². In some developing countries bear a significant burden due to the spread of incurable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) viruses, increased travel and behavioral change. There is a changing trend of sexual and reproductive behavior between young people and this need more attention and awareness by healthcare professionals

to provide the necessary sexual or reproductive care and education³. Unfortunately, many studies during this stage have proven that young people do not have enough information about STDs and their prevention⁴⁻⁶. According to Women Aid Organization, women shelter home is a place which provide temporary shelter, emotional and physical support for the affected women. It could be a victim of domestic violence, rape, or a woman with a problem with sexual discipline. These shelters provide the necessary social, emotional, mental support services that enable and empower them to live a better life in the future⁷. World health organization estimates that there are more than 333 million new cases associated with four sexually transmitted diseases (chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhoea and trichomoniasis) each year⁸. Nowadays, there are at least 30 cases that are sexually transmitted⁹. Among teenagers, girls are more likely to contract sexually transmitted diseases than their male counterparts, involving HIV / AIDS, particularly during sexual contact with another's. This increased vulnerability has been attributed to concern beyond their power, as violence of sex and abuse of women, initiation of sex early and the inability of women about negotiate safe sex. another predisposing elements involve severe bias, education loss, powerless, loss of reach to prevent the pregnancy and concern of reproductive health for women. so, It is hard for teenage girls to protect themselves from unwanted gestation and sexual transmitted diseases. in addition, young persons are not educated about STD, and their knowledge of different diseases is **extremely** weak. while there are much researches that have investigated the understanding about sexual transmitted diseases between different age category, social class, very little research has examined knowledge of women's in young age about sexual transmitted diseases. women information regarding the method of transmission or prevention of sexually transmitted diseases is very limited¹⁰ Hence, the present study was conducted to assess the knowledge about sexually transmitted disease (STD) among the women in a Al-Nasiriyah governorate.

Methodology

Community based cross-sectional study conducted for a purposive (non probability) sample of 500 women in reproductive age in Al-Nasiriyah governorate-Iraq at age group 15-45 years. The instrument designed and

constructed by the investigator. It based on literatures clinical background, and previous studies. The study instrument consist of two domain first one included demographic characters of women as age, level of education, occupation, resident and second includes information schedule about STD such as routes of transmission, clinical features, tests, complications and attitude of women. The women were interviewed for their perception toward health seeking behavior. Method of data collection was through visit some private clinic and houses and supermarket and some centers of care by face to face interview. It started from the 11th of January to the 16th of August 2020 Each interview took approximately (15) minutes to complete questionnaire form. The interviewing is carried out with each study sample who participated in the study. Before collect the data researcher explained the purpose of the study for every woman and obtained verbal consent from each study sample.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS Version 25 statistical software (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to determine the frequency of the women socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge and attitude about STD.

Results

about 500 women at reproductive age were involved at this study which divided into several criteria (age, resident, occupation, level of education, knowledge and attitude about STD). As showed in demographic data (Table 1) highest percent from sample at age group 15-24 old year (40%) and about 163(29%) From them lived in urban and 337(60%) in rural. Regarding to level of education highest percent 168(33%) were illiterate. While 353(62%) employed and 147(26%) unemployed. Among the different methods of transmission, 325 (64%) women opined that blood transfusion was the most common mode of contracting STDs followed by 206 (40%) through the open wound of the genitals only 125(29%) from women thought that infections could also spread through sexual intercourse. When asked about the symptoms, 384(68.3%) were aware of vaginal discharge as the most common symptom, followed by 194(34.5%) Genital and mouth ulcers and 168(29.9%) burning with urination. When enquired about the

laboratory test, 310(61%) were aware diagnosis can be done by examination of blood as compared to 176 (34 %) women, who thought that urine could also be a precursors to diagnose the disease. 176(78%) from participants thought cause abortion followed by, 287(55%) cause infertility as show in table (2). 404(72%) from women opined that abstinence from sex thought to be the most common method of preventing the disease and 343(61%) thought It cannot be prevented as show in table (3)

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of study sample.

Age group in year	Frequency	Percentage
15-24	201	40%
25-34	175	35%
35-45	124	24%
Resident		
Urban	163	29%
Rural	337	60%
Educational level		
Illiterate	168	33%
Primary school	124	24%
Secondary school	59	11%
Higher school	91	18%
Bachelor and above	58	11 %
Occupation		
Employed	147	26%
Unemployed	353	62%

Table 2. Knowledge of women about methods of transmission, Signs and symptoms, laboratory test and consequences of STDs.

Methods of transmission	Frequency	Percent
Unprotected sex	125	29%
blood transfusion	325	64%
Through the open wound of the genitals	206	40%
Needle prick	173	34%
Staying, eating together	161	31%
Mother to child	202	40%
Signs and symptoms		
vaginal discharge	384	68.3%
Fever	143	25.4%
irregular menstrual cycle	115	20.5%
Genital and mouth ulcers	194	34.5%
Tuberculosis	152	27%
burning with urination	168	29.9%
Laboratory tests		
Blood	310	61%
Urine	176	34%
Another test	240	47%
Complication		
Infertility	287	55%
vaginal cancer	211	41%
Abortion	396	78%
Death	257	45%

Table 3: Knowledge of women about prevention of STDs

Prevention	Frequency	Percent
Abstinence	404	71%
Use condom	305	54%
Sexual education for women	289	51%
It cannot be prevented	343	61%

Discussion

Current study to be evaluated Knowing and attitude of woman towards the sexually transmitted diseases, with presence an effort to generate disease spread, features, methods of prevention, diagnosis and availability of healthcare facilities in many hospitals. In Iraq, the issue of sexually transmitted diseases needs local attention And it has the ability to reach a large audience health problem because it is a conservative society, and have customs and traditions that are wrongly understood regarding the ways of transmitting the disease. As showed result in table (1) highest percent 201(40%) women at age group 15-24 this finding agreement with study reported that the 15-29 years age group have relatively good knowledge and awareness about STDs this finding is to a study conducted in Bangladesh ¹¹. 337(60%) from sample lived in rural. Majority of the women 168(33%) illiterates this disagreement with study reported Majority of the women 68 (37.78%) had completed primary education ¹². As showed about 353(62%) from sample unemployed this finding agree with study reported majority of sample were housewife (81%)¹³. As showed in table(2) 325(64%) thought transmitted by blood transfusion, 202(40) from mother to child, 173(34%) by needle prick and 161(31%) transmitted by staying, eating together this finding, 125(29%) disagreement with study reported a study done in Khartoum 72.1% of the respondents knew that HIV could be transmitted by heterosexual contact,38.1% by blood transfusion, 3.5% during pregnancy, 47% by using skin piercing instruments and (15.6%) thought by

sharing meal ¹⁴. 384(68.3)from women thought most common clinical features vaginal discharge followed by194(34.5%) by Genital and mouth ulcers and this result disagreement with study reported (32.78%) of the participants told the clinical features of STIs as fever, 41.675% told vaginal discharge and 13.89% told burning micturition ¹¹. As showed in table(3) 404(71%) STD can prevented by abstinence from sex followed by 343(61%) It cannot be prevented, 305(54%) by use condom this result disagreement with study reported that 87.5% of the positive respondents has no knowledge of protection by using male condom, 62.5% of the positive ones had acknowledge that they can took protection by avoiding unprotected sex in Khartoum ¹⁴.

Conclusion

There is necessary a needful to promote the tuition in Iraq about sexual transmitted diseases especially between those lived in rural region and older women (34-45 years). The formal and informal programs guaranteed educational knowledge and awareness about the sexually transmitted infection may applicated to help persons how about diseases . the issue of STDs need to more improved to help the woman who kept on them health and Can be confirmed in together work with authority organizations to make sure the successfulness of such educational crusade.

Recommendation:

Provide efficient educational programs to up-to-date information about sexual and reproductive health are

needed in the Iraq. Strategies to increase knowledge and attitudes are important tools for improving protective behaviors, especially with respect to contraception, health care surveillance and exposure to sexual risk.

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