

A Comparative Study to Assess Knowledge and Perception Regarding Leucorrhoea among Women of Reproductive Age Group in Selected Rural and Urban Areas of Ludhiana, Punjab

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Abstract

Leucorrhoea is a thick, whitish vaginal discharge. It is a symptom, not a disease. Subjectively and objectively it is an expression of some underlying disorder, either functional or organic. A comparative study was conducted to assess the knowledge and perception regarding leucorrhoea among 100 women of reproductive age group by using convenience sampling technique. The finding of the present study revealed that highly positive co- relation was found between knowledge and perception regarding leucorrhoea, $r = 0.8$ for rural area and $r = 0.9$ for urban area, indicated the highly positive co- relation between knowledge and perception regarding leucorrhoea. Hence it is further recommended to this study on large sample for better generalization. Similar study can be conducted by using qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and on OPD patients i.e. with leucorrhea.

Key words: knowledge, perception, leucorrhoea, reproductive age group.

Introduction

Leucorrhoea is a thick, whitish vaginal discharge. It is a natural defence mechanism that the vagina uses to maintain its chemical balance as well as preserve the flexibility of vaginal tissue.¹ Leucorrhea is mainly classified into two types - physiological and pathological. Physiological leucorrhoea is an excessive discharge from healthy vagina. Pathological leucorrhoea is white discharge due to some disease of the female reproductive tract.² The symptoms include excessive and foul smelling discharge, pain, lethargy and weakness, vaginal itching, spotting on the under wear.³ Depression, isolation, irritability

and lack of concentration, rashes or spot on the genitals, painful sexual act and also cervical cancer, pelvic inflammatory diseases and infertility.⁴ The treatment of leucorrhoea is to improve the general health.⁵ Kapoor AK, Kaur J. (2013) conducted a cross sectional study to assess the knowledge and perception regarding leucorrhoea in a Slum Dwelling South Asian Community. The study reported that the working women are expected to hold greater knowledge and perception about leucorrhoea was varied. The most common perception that was held among these women regarding leucorrhoea was 'weakness'.⁶

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Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Daba (rural) and Jain colony (urban area) of Ludhiana, Punjab on a total of 100 women of reproductive age group, 15- 45 years. Data was collected by using interview method. Personal one to one interview was conducted. The structured questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge and likert scale to assess the perception regarding leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group. Content validity of the structured tool was determined by the expert's opinion. These experts were from the different specialties i.e. obstetrics and gynecological nursing and community health nursing.

Findings

The analysis of the data revealed the following:

- In rural area majority (38%) women of reproductive age group belonged to 26- 35 year, (86%) were non- working and (50%) had unmarried, (30%) were having Sen. Sec school education, (52%) living in nuclear family and (70%) belonged to Sikh religion. Where as in urban area, majority (46%) women of reproductive age group belonged to 15-25 year, (74%) were non- working and (48%) had unmarried. (46%) were graduate/ post graduate degree, (66%) living in nuclear family and (60%) belonged to Hindu religion.
- The urban area women of reproductive age group had higher knowledge as compared

to rural area women regarding leucorrhoea and in both rural and urban area majority of women had average level of knowledge regarding leucorrhoea.

- In both rural and urban area women of reproductive age group had positive perception regarding leucorrhoea as a disease but urban area women had more positive perception as compared to rural area women regarding leucorrhoea.
- According to mean knowledge score, Occupation ($Z= 4.45$), educational status ($Z= 8.73$ for rural area and 4.80 for urban area), and type of family ($Z= 3.18$) had significant effect on knowledge regarding leucorrhoea.
- According to mean knowledge score, Age ($Z= 0.96$ for rural and 0.12 for urban area), marital status ($Z= 0.19$ for rural and 1.20 for urban area), and religion ($Z= 0.54$ for rural and 0.17 for urban area) had no effect on knowledge regarding leucorrhoea.
- According to mean perception score, occupation ($Z= 5.90$), educational status ($Z= 6.46$ for rural and 4.80 for urban area), and type of family ($Z= 2.73$) had significant effect on perception regarding leucorrhoea.
- According to mean perception score, Age ($Z= 0.54$ for rural and 0.25 for urban area), marital status ($Z= 0.23$ for rural and 0.84 for urban area), and religion ($Z= 0.54$ for rural and 0.17 for urban area) had no effect on perception regarding leucorrhoea.

Table 1: Mean, mean percentage knowledge score regarding leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group according to area of knowledge

		Knowledge score			
		Rural area (n=50)		Urban area (n=50)	
Area of knowledge	Maximum score	Mean score	Mean percentage	Mean score	Mean percentage
Introduction	4	2.24	11	3.18	16
Causes	4	2.12	11	2.22	11
Symptoms	4	2.02	10	2.4	12
Management	4	2.52	12	2.62	13
Prevention & complication	4	1.86	9	2.24	11
Total	20	10.76	53	12.66	63

Maximum score: 20

Minimum score: 0

Table 2: Mean, mean percentage perception score regarding leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group according to area of perception N= 100

Area of perception	Maximum score	Perception score			
		Rural area (n=50)		Urban area (n=50)	
		Mean score	Mean percentage	Mean score	Mean percentage
1. Perceived causes	33	24.16	20	26.98	22
2. Perceived effect	78	52.8	44	59.98	49
3. Perceived treatment	9	6.12	5	7.26	6
Total	120	83.08	69	94.22	77

Maximum score: 120

Minimum score: 40

Discussion

In both rural and urban area, women of reproductive age group had higher knowledge and positive perception regarding leucorrhoea. The findings were contradicted by **Nagaraj A, Yousuf A, Ganta S. (2013)** who studied Perception of Rural and Urban Mothers about Consumption of Targeted Fortified Products. Results shown that a total of 53.33% rural and 65.33% urban mothers had knowledge, amongst which 52.67% rural and 66.00% urban mothers ($P= 0.026$) consumed TFP directed towards mothers. In addition, 56% rural and 94.67% urban mothers had knowledge about TFP directed towards children, amongst which 19.33% rural and 50.67% urban mothers fed their children with TFP. There was significantly less awareness regarding consumption of TFP directed towards both pregnant women and children among rural when compared to urban population.⁷ Educational status had significant effect on the knowledge regarding leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group in rural and urban area. The study findings were supported by **Chaudhary V, Kumar R, K Agrawal V. (2012)** who studied Prevalence and Determinants of Vaginal Discharge among Women of Reproductive Age Group. Result shows that illiteracy (60.1%) was found to be significantly associated with vaginal discharge. And lack of knowledge is also associated with it.⁸

Marital status had significant effect on perception regarding leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group in rural and urban area. The study findings were supported by **Mueller, Wasserheit. (1991)**

conducted a study to assess the women's perception of white discharge. Results shows that there were noticeable difference in the women's perception of leucorrhoea by their marital status and personal experiences. They are perceiving leucorrhoea as a disease.⁹

Conclusion

In both rural and urban area majority of women had average and below average level of knowledge and positive perception regarding leucorrhoea.

Conflict of interest: Nil

Source of funding: The researcher has used self funding system to collect the data.

Ethical clearance: A written permission from Oswal college of nursing, Ludhiana was taken before conducted the study. Verbal consent from subjects was taken before filling the questionnaire from women of reproductive age group. Anonymity of subjects and confidentiality of information was maintained. So, it was ensured that the study did not affect the subjects in any way.

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