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Assessment of knowledge regarding risk factors of Hepatitis C virus transmission and options to avoid them (A comparative analysis)

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Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) is affecting 170 million people annually (WHO, 2012) and Pakistan ranks high in chronic hepatitis. A comparative cross-sectional study of HCV positive (n = 344) and negative (n = 176) respondents at Taluka Hospital (OPD), Rural District, Sindh was done using a structured questionnaire and open ended questions. Analysis was done by cross-tabulation and Chi-square test. Aim of the study was to improve the knowledge of risk factors of HCV transmission. Objectives were to assess the knowledge regarding HCV risk factors and to identify the options to avoid HCV transmission. A total of 520 respondents (66% HCV positive) showed highest infection in 21-30 years ages (39.0%) with more infection in urban population (75.6%) and illiterate group (52.9) having more family deaths due to hepatitis in HCV positive respondents. Majority of HCV positive cases had misperceptions of water (11.3%; $P < 0.036$), food (10.3%; $P = 0.283$), heat (10.1%; ($P = 0.412$), and mosquitoes (9.9%; $P < 0.003$) as the major factors of transmission. History of more therapeutic injections/year (60%; $P < 0.0001$), surgery (80%; $P < 0.009$), shaving at barber's shop (64.2%; $P < 0.119$), sharing tooth brush, razor and miswak, (82%, 77% and 88.1% respectively; $P < 0.0001$, $P < 0.0001$, $P < 0.0001$) was more in HCV positive respondents. Respondents suggested launching auto disable syringes, disposable dental/surgical instruments and registering barber's shops with a policy to use new blade/razor for each customer. HCV positive population needs health education and awareness to resolve misperceptions.

Biography

Samina Naeem Khalid is a medical doctor and has done her Ph.D in Reproductive Endocrinology from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. She is a trained health professional in IVF/ICSI and has done her Fellowship in Reproductive Medicine from Cleveland Clinic, USA. She is working as an Associate Professor in Department of Reproductive/Maternal & Child Health at Health Services Academy, Islamabad. She is involved in training of Public Health Professionals with Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Pakistan. She is currently working on a country project with UNFPA on LHW MNCH workload assessment and Human Rights Based Family Planning Service in Pakistan.

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