A comparative study to evaluate the effectiveness of counselling under PPTCT programme with regard to knowledge, attitude and sex behaviour and practices of pregnant women in selected hospitals of Delhi

Ms.Sneh Latha Manocha

ABSTRACT

Background and objectives: By the end of 2014 there were 36.9 million people living with HIV/ AIDS globally and there were, 5 million people living with HIV in Asia Pacific. China, Indonesia and India account for 78% of new HIV infections. Women now account for more than half of those living with HIV worldwide. 3.64% of all HIV infections in India are due to perinatal transmission. PPTCT program is identified as an important opportunity for pregnant women and their spouses to know their HIV status so as to guard against infecting the unborn child pre- and post-delivery. Knowledge of factors such as perceptions, attitudes, behaviours& practices of target population is vitally important and allows making these programmes appropriately targeted and more acceptable. The present study assessed the prevailing attitudes, knowledge and sex behaviour and practices of the pregnant women so as to assist the policy makers to make antenatal prevention strategies attuned more to the present belief and practices. It also aimed to find out the effectiveness of the current programme strategies (PPTCT) in improving the knowledge, attitude, behaviour and practices of pregnant women.

Method: The evaluative survey approach was adapted for the study. The data was collected using structured knowledge questionnaire, structured practice questionnaire and attitude scale from 538 pregnant women: 252 pregnant women attending PPTCT counseling and 286 pregnant women not attending PPTCT counseling recruited by systematic random sampling.

Results: Most of the pregnant women in both the groups had fair knowledge with regard to HIV/AIDS. The obtained mean difference of 4.92 between mean knowledge score of pregnant women attending PPTCT counseling and pregnant women not attending PPTCT
counseling with regard to HIV/AIDS was found to be statistically significant as evident from t-value of 9.910 at p<0.05.

Majority of Pregnant women (76.19% and 73.43%) in both the groups had less favourable attitude towards HIV/AIDS. The obtained mean difference of 1.33 between the mean attitude score of pregnant women attending PPTCT counseling and pregnant women not attending PPTCT counseling with regard to HIV/AIDS was not found to be statistically significant as evident from t-value of 1.501 at p>.05.

Majority of Pregnant women (85.71% and 69.58% respectively) in both the groups practiced unsafe Sex with regards prevention and transmission of HIV/AIDS. The obtained mean difference of 6.12 between sex Practice and behaviour score of pregnant women attending PPTCT counseling and pregnant women not attending PPTCT counseling was found to be statistically significant as evident from t value of -5.370 at p<0.05.

**Interpretation:** Participants of the current study lack the substantial knowledge and hold misbelieve on issues related to HIV/AIDS in general and this leads them to risky sexual behaviors. Despite high level of awareness about HIV/AIDS, condom use is still low as a means of protection against such infections.

**Conclusion:** Despite sustained efforts, both awareness and use of condoms have remained low in India especially with respect to poorer and uneducated women. Preventive policies should, therefore, be targeted to these groups by increasing awareness of HIV/AIDS and condom through effective media and interpersonal communication. In addition, there is a need to implement policies that support women’s education for behavioural change through communication programmes especially designed for targeting illiterate and poor sections of the society.

**Key words:** Knowledge, Attitude, Sex behaviour& practices, Pregnant women, PPTCT counseling and Antenatal clinic