

The level of awareness about HIV/AIDS among youth at Gudiyatham Taluk, Vellore district, Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

India is on the brink of a major HIV epidemic. The epidemic is the latest threat to survival of children, women and men in India. Already India has 5.2 million people infected with HIV as per latest NACO figures, June 2004. It now ranks as the second country of highest number of HIV infection in the world after South Africa. Globally India, with an estimated 0.9 percent prevalence rate, yet India is the country of one billion populations so even low rates of infection translate into large number of people infected. In India, adolescence aged between 13 – 20 accounts for 22 percent of the population. Surveillance data revealed that young people are at the centre of the HIV epidemic. 50 percent of all new infections are in young people below the age of 30. Young people are primarily exposed to risk behaviour due to lack of knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The whopping figure of HIV statistics of youth is a serious subject of concern. The researcher selected the youth group of between 18-35 years of age and it was crucial period in the life of human beings. Therefore it is high time to help and make them to understand the value of each human beings health. This research paper focus in knowledge, attitude and belief about HIV/AIDS among rural youth at Gudiyatham block at Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, India.

Keywords: awareness, HIV/AIDS, youth, Tamil Nadu

Introduction

The youth population account to 50% of the total population affected with HIV. Most of these people come under the age group of 18-35 years. This disease not only devested the lives of those infected but also their families, communities and the economic of any countries. While those infected with the HIV virus are most vulnerable. The youth are the most sexually active people at the spot of the moment they often tend to indulge themselves in unsafe sex or sex with multiple partners. Thereby increasing the possibility of getting infected with HIV.

Statement of the Problem

The youth are the most sexually active people. Drug abuses and drug infection with the help of syringe is mostly common amongst the youth. They carelessly share the same needle which might get infected after several uses. The truth remains that youth is the main cause of multiplication of the disease and in order to uproot the problems of HIV, it is very essential to cure its propagation amongst the youth. This is because it is the youth who are the most active at sexual relationships, drug abuse, prostitution and reproduction. It has to be kept in mind, that it is even more necessary to curb its spread amongst the women and young girls as they pass this virus to the next generation through reproduction. Therefore in order to reduce its impact the young lot, irrespective of their gender, has to be treated through antiretroviral therapy or other HIV vaccines. The impact of HIV/AIDS is pervasive and far-reaching affecting individuals and communities not on any psychologically but also economically and socially families lose their most productive members to this disease.

Significance of the Research Study

HIV/AIDS is a life killing disease which affects all the people in the society; youth are the main victims of it since they are

exposed to sexual habitations. According to the statistics more than thirty five percent of young adults were the victims of such dangerous disease in whole nation. Therefore it is important that to study about HIV/AIDS among youth in the present scenario. In the Indian rural cultural context, the most appropriate way to handling the sexual urge is to encourage the adolescents to interact freely and spontaneously with the members of the opposite sex. Though the rural community would not accept a boy and a girl to develop inmate relationship, having healthy, uninhibited and open relationships with members of the opposite sex in general should not be prevented but rather encouraged by most adults. Adolescents are capable of making responsible choices about their sexual behaviour. Therefore it is important to concentrate the youth group and their awareness level about HIV/AIDS among rural youth in Gudiyatham Taluk, Vellore District.

Objectives

General Objective

The level of awareness about HIV/AIDS among youth at Gudiyatham Taluk, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu, India.

Specific Objectives.

1. To study the family background of the youth in Erthagal Panchayat, Gudiyatham Taluk.
2. To know the social status of rural youth.
3. To know the economic condition of rural youth.
4. To find out the Knowledge, Attitude and Belief about HIV/AIDS among Rural Youth.

Research Methodology

The primary data collection was conducted among 60 rural youth (only male because, the young girls were not interested to answer the questions and they felt shy for answering the questions related to sex and sexuality) in Erthagal Panchayat,

Gudiyatham Taluk, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu using systematic stratified random sampling in a Descriptive Design. Erthangal Panchayat has got four villages. The selected respondents for research study were in the age group of 18 – 35 years and the total population in that age group in the selected four villages were 120, among them 15 youth from each village was selected for primary data collection. Hence the total no of sampling for this study was 60 male rural youth.

Definition of the Terms

HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. It kills an important kind of blood cell -- the CD4 T lymphocyte, or T cell. These T cells are the quarterbacks of the immune system. As they die off, the body becomes more and more vulnerable to other diseases. Germs take this opportunity to invade the body. The diseases they cause are called opportunistic infections (OIs for short). When people with HIV get these infections -- or when their CD4 T-cell levels get too low.

AIDS is short for acquired immune deficiency syndrome. AIDS is a disease that slowly destroys the body's immune system. Without these important defences, a person with AIDS can't fight off germs and cancers.

Awareness Conscious emphasizes the recognition of something sensed or felt Awareness to be awake is to have full consciousness of something:

YOUTH the time of life between childhood and maturity youth means early maturity; the state of being young or immature or inexperienced. In this study youth means the age group of between 18 - 35 years male only.

Main Findings and Suggestions

The main findings stimulated the researcher to render the valuable suggestions to youths particularly rural men for taking measures to improve the status of young adults since they are the future generations.

1. More than half (65.5%) of the respondents belong to Hindu religion and 34.5% of the respondents were from Christian religion.
2. More than sixty per cent (63.0%) were doing agricultural work, 15.0% of them were working in private company, 14.0% of them were studying and 8.0% of them were in Government employment.
3. 66.0% of the respondent's income was below Rs. 5000, 34.0% of the respondent's income was between Rs.5001-7000.
4. Majority (82.0%) of the rural youth were used to save from their less income of below Rs.5000 and 18.0% of them were having the savings habit of savings from their income between Rs.5001-7000.
5. 36.0% of the respondents said that they were participated in an awareness programme and 64.0% of the respondents answered that they were not participated in any awareness programme and no idea about the HIV/AIDS.
6. More than one third (34.0%) of the respondents said that this diseases is spread and transmitted by blood transmission, 24.0% of the youth answered that HIV/AIDS spreads through pregnant women to baby, 23.5% of the respondents said that it spreads through unprotected sexual intercourse and 18.5% of the youth said it spreads through unsterilized syringes.
7. One fourth (25.0%) of the respondents said that loss of weight was one of the symptoms for the HIV/AIDS, 35.0% of the respondents said that continuous fever was the

symptom of the HIV/AIDS, 20.0% of the respondents said tuber culosis was the symptom of HIV/AIDS and the remaining 20.0% of the respondents said that Diarrhoea was the symptom.

8. 23.0% of the respondents said that HIV/AIDS is a communicable disease while 76.0% of the respondents said that the HIV/AIDS is not a communicable disease.
9. 86.0% of the respondents said that it was necessary for testing HIV/AIDS and 14.0% of the respondents answered that the testing of HIV/AIDS was not necessary and not needed.
10. 22.0% of the respondents said that they were all undergone HIV/AIDS test and 78.0% of the respondents said that they were not undergone HIV/AIDS test so for.
11. Less than forty per cent (37.0%) of the respondents agreed that they know some idea about the usage of condoms. While 63.0% of the respondents did not have any idea about the usage of condoms.
12. 88.0% of the respondents answered that HIV/AIDS person as a normal person and 12.0% of the respondents answered that HIV/AIDS person as not a normal person.
13. 45.0% of the respondents said that HIV/AIDS affected person can be isolated from the family and the remaining 55.0% of the respondents answered that HIV/AIDS affected person can not be isolated from the family. It shows that affected patient could be mingled with the family.
14. 90.0% of respondents said that HIV/AIDS is a preventable disease and 10.0% of the respondents said that the HIV/AIDS is a not a preventible diseases.
15. 58.0% of the respondents said that the government were giving different kinds of counselling and 42.0% of them answered that Govt were giving free medicine.

Suggestions

In the spark of the above findings, the researcher humbly recommends the following suggestions to improve the status of young adults especially rural youth group.

1. The majority of the respondents were agricultural coolie workers in the rural areas and they were not much aware about the killing disease HIV/AIDS, Hence it is the prime role of social workers to create awareness about the same.
2. It was observed during research study that most of the youth group was not keeping their health in a good condition because of their bad habits, hence it is suggested that health education class may be organised by the Professional Social Workers, Medical Practioners, Health Educators and other Well Wishers who are interested in the welfare of the rural youth to keep and maintain a good physic.

Conclusion

Health status of youth is very essential for the development of nation. Since physical condition is the main stream for all such developments it is high time to give proper health education awareness to the whole nations especially youth who are living in Rural areas. By assessing the health status of youths particularly in the age group of between 18-35 years, this research study was able to determine the level of awareness existing among the youth group for promoting the holistic health among the young specially male members and preventing from spreading the life killing disease. So that, it

helps the individual, family and community at large to keep and maintain good physic.

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