

A Study Regarding Awareness and Spread of Hepatitis B and C among Barbers and Beauty Parlors Working in DG Khan

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Abstract

Over 2 billion people have been infected with Hepatitis B virus and an estimated 170 million people are chronically infected with the Hepatitis C virus, In Pakistan specific estimates for the prevalence of both disease range from 2% to 10%. Recently the rates of HBV infection in the country have been increasing attributed to a lack of proper health facilities, lower socioeconomic status and public health awareness about transmission of communicable diseases [1,2]. A significant proportion of those exposed to HBV become chronically infected and are at considerable risk of liver cancer chronic active hepatitis and cirrhosis [3]. These infected people may not be aware of their HBV status and are not clinically ill but are a source of infection to others [4]. Pakistan is in the category of moderately high prevalent countries with the prevalence range from 2.5%-10% [4]. Although in the past 20 years Hepatitis B incidence has declined significantly both in children and adults because of effective immunization and improved safe sexual practices. Still a large no of cases continue to occur among adults with high risk behaviors, unsafe sexual practices, unscreened blood and blood transfusions, needle sharing, dialysis and tattooing are established risk behaviors for transmission of hepatitis B [5]. In adult population studies conducted earlier both nationally and internationally have revealed that most of the barbers and beauticians were unaware about the risk of transmission of hepatitis B infection associated with their profession. Most of the barbers and beauticians reuse their instruments on multiple clients without proper disinfection [6]. Hepatitis.

C is known to be a major public health concern across the world HCV grading is mainly associated with sharing of toothbrush, razor and miswak A lack of knowledge regarding mode of transmission was studied to be responsible for spread of HCV according to the studies conducted in Germany and Netherland [9]. HBV and HCV spread occurs by different unhygienic measures as hazardous use of therapeutic injections, shaving from barbers, blood transfusion, mother to child transmission, tattooing and unsafe sexual practices, Shaving from barbers and sharing the razor is known to be a key risk factor for HBV spread in Italy and for HCV among psychiatric patients in Japan, Egypt and Pakistan [5,10,11]. In Pakistan, very few studies have been conducted on this issue and these studies were conducted in large cities. To know the knowledge regarding HBV transmission among barbers and beauticians of DG Khan we conducted a cross sectional study.

The results of this study showed that 38 persons are literate and 2

are illiterate. 22 people know about hepatitis B and C 4 know to some extent and 14 have no idea about it. Only 19 (47.5%) have knowledge about the way of transmission of hepatitis B and C, 18 persons (45%) don't know and 3 (7.5%) know to some extent. 33 (82.5%) know that razors and other instruments can be the cause of transmission while 7 (17.5%) don't know. 34 persons agreed that their profession can be the cause of transmission while rest 6 persons don't agree with it. 31 change blades for every new client 3 don't change and 2 occasionally change it 4 don't use it. All of them (40) dispose of their waste in municipal waste. 9 (22.5%) are vaccinated 26 (65%) are not vaccinated and 5 are incompletely vaccinated. 39 wash their instruments and 1 not. 39 don't perform minor surgeries while 1 do on and off. 33 know that they are at high risk and 7 don't know. Another study was conducted about the same issue in district Swat about hepatitis B and C. They knew a little about hepatitis, its risk factors, mode of transmission especially reuse of razors. Most interviewees had some information about AIDS. Reuse of blades on multiple customers without sterilization was common among half of the barbers interviewed. Such unhygienic measures are increasing the risk of pathogen spread from one to another person Such issue of blade reuse has also been reported from a survey of barbers in India.

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