

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Family Health Education: The Role of School Child

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Abstract: *Background:* The HIV which leads to AIDS is a leading epidemic across the world. Programme managers and policy makers have often recommended that schools can act as the centre point for disseminating information and education on HIV/AIDS. As children are valuable resource for the future of a country, it is imperative that they should be equipped with ample amount of information so as to protect themselves and their counterparts from falling of prey to this still-an-incurable killer disease. With this background the present study was conducted to assess the role of school children in enhancing awareness and health education about HIV/AIDS among their parents. *Aim and Objectives:* 1) To assess the awareness about HIV/AIDS among Parents. 2) The role of school child in family health education. *Study period:* September 2010. *Study Duration:* One Month. *Participants:* IX and X students and their parents. *Method:* Pre and Post survey was conducted among parents regarding the knowledge about HIV/AIDS through their children who were used as tools of awareness about the disease. A total of 58 students were used as tools of increasing awareness about various health aspects. *Statistical Analysis:* Data was analyzed using Z test difference between two proportions using SPSS software. *Result:* Overall 23% difference was found in pre and post in parents about knowledge of HIV/AIDS ($p < 0.001$). By observing increased knowledge about disease among themselves parents opined that education about health is necessary in school children. *Conclusion:* The results of pre and post survey reveal that there is a tremendous impact on the awareness of HIV/AIDS among parents.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, Knowledge, Awareness, Students, Parents.

Introduction

India adopted the National Policy for children in August 1974 and recognized children as the "Nations supremely important asset" [1]. It was David Morely and his colleagues at the Institute of Child Health and Education, University of London who identified the un-trapped resource. "The Child Power" for spreading health messages [2]. Prof. Hugh Hawes stated that "Children have a vitally important part to play in the health community, not merely by being "kept healthy" by adults, but in passing on health messages to family members and by jointly co-operating to become a positive force for health" [3]. Hence school education has been described as a "social vaccine" and it can serve as a powerful preventive tool [4]. HIV/AIDS is a fatal disease and it has become global epidemic estimated of WHO/UNAIDS suggested that India has the largest number of HIV infected persons in the world. According to UNAIDS 33.4 million people worldwide are currently living with HIV; among them 31.3 million are adults, and deaths due to HIV were 2.0 million [5].

India is on the edge of an AIDS volcano, as there is no effective treatment or vaccine against HIV infection, only health education can prevent the spread of the disease [6]. The epidemic can be controlled by preventive measures, which essentially require a greater amount of awareness among the public. Child to child program is based on the concept that children in school and family members need to be considered as partners in spreading health messages and benefitting from them [1]. Much can be achieved in the health field through children. It is worth noting that there is a school in almost every village or pre-urban squatter area. So education about health and disease can be spread by children to their parents. Such studies have not been conducted till today. Therefore an attempt was made to understand the role of school children in enhancing the awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Aims and Objectives:

1. To assess the awareness about HIV/AIDS among parents.
 2. The role of school child in family health education.
- (With specially reference to AIDS awareness among elders in the family)

Material and Methods

The attempt has been made to assess the awareness about HIV/AIDS among parents through their sons and daughters. The school children of IX and X standards were used as tools of increasing awareness of health related aspects, as it is easy to assemble and feasible to follow-up. Children of this age group will have more curiosity to know about new things and they can convey the message effectively. In the present study 58 parents were included. The parents of particular school children were given pre designed Performa which included multiple choice questions about HIV/AIDS. The response rate was 100%. The study was conducted over a period of one month, from 1st September to 30th September. Written consent was obtained from the school principal after explaining the purpose of the study. Students of study group (n=58) were taught about HIV/AIDS by conducting four sessions and they were used as a health messengers; they were informed to interact with their parents. After a week the post test interview was conducted to know the information about the same. To assess the impact of the health education by children the pre and post test data was analyzed using Z test Difference between two Proportions using SPSS 15th version software.

Results

A total number of 58 the school children of IX and X standard were used as tools of increasing awareness about HIV/AIDS infection. Among the parents of study children 42(72%) were males and 16(28%) were females. Maximum number respondents belonged to age group 40-50 years. Government/private service employees constituted about 36(62%) of respondents followed by housewives 12 (21%) and Business 10 (17%). All participants (100%) knew about HIV/AIDS, through one or the other media. Most of them 55 (95%) heard about it from TV, other sources which contributed very less in their knowledge were news papers and magazines.

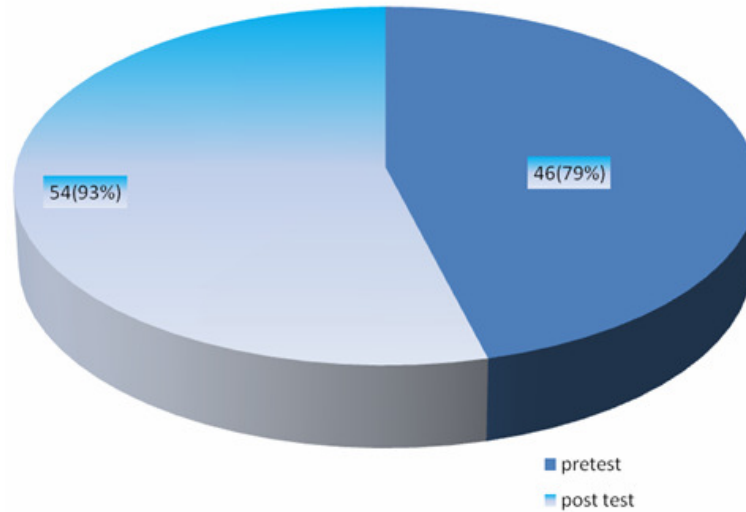
The common misconceptions regarding modes of transmission of HIV was by mosquito bite, polluted food and water, sharing public toilet, sharing food and drink, shaking hands, and by touching. But after Health Education by their children, 99% of them gave correct answers and it was found statistically significant ($p<0.05$). There was tremendous increase in knowledge about signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS, and it was found statistically significant ($p<0.05$). The correct knowledge about diagnose of the disease increased from 78% to 91% in pre and post test respectively. They had the wrong conception that HIV identified by urine test and X-ray test in the pre test, it had decreased to 10% in the post test and statistically significant difference was found at $p<0.05$. However, that its incurable was known about 67% in the pre test, and it decreased to 38% in the post test, Highly significant difference found at $p<0.001$.(Table 1)

Table-1: Knowledge of Respondents Regarding HIV/AIDS		
Variable	Pre test N (%)	Post test N (%)
1.Modes of Transmission		
Mosquito bite	03 (05)	01 (02)
Sexual intercourse	56 (96)	57 (98)
Sterilized needles and equipments	43 (74)	55 (95)
Polluted food and water	14 (24)	05 (09)
Sharing toilet	13 (22)	06 (10)
Shaking hands and touching	07 (12)	04 (07)
Infected mother to child	16(28)	06 (10)
Transmission of Infected blood	57 (98)	57 (98)
2. Signs and symptoms		
Weight loss	53 (91)	57 (98)
Diarrhea for more than one month	42 (72)	54 (93)
Cough for more than one month	37 (64)	54 (93)
Fever for more than one	51 (88)	57 (98)
3.Diagnosis of HIV		
By signs and symptoms	38 (66)	50 (86)
Blood test	52 (90)	55 (95)
Urine test	22 (38)	08 (14)
X ray test	11 (19)	04 (07)

Table 2 reveals about Modes of prevention of disease, significant difference was observed in pre and post test in giving correct answers ($p<0.05$). In the pre test 22(36%) participants opined that HIV manifest after six months but in the post test it has decreased to 5(9%). In the pre test 72% parents knew about correct preventive methods of disease, But in the post test it is increased to 95% highly significant difference was found at $p<0.001$. By observing increased knowledge about disease among themselves, they opined that Education about Health and Disease is very much essential in school level.

Table 2:- Knowledge of Respondents Regarding HIV/AIDS			
Variable	Pre test N (%)	Post test N (%)	Test applied
1.Prevention of HIV/AIDS	39 (19)	22 (38)	Z=3.31 P=0.001
2.Modes of prevention			
Avoiding multiple partner sex	53 (91)	56 (97)	Z=1.18 P=.234
Using condoms	50 (86)	55(95)	Z= 1.6 P=0.101
Using sterilized needle and equipments	51 (88)	56 (97)	Z=1.76 P=0.07
HIV free blood Transmission	40(79)	55 (95)	Z=3.84 P=0.000
3.Time required manifest the disease after contact			
After six months	21 (36)	05 (09)	Z=3.77 P=0.000
1-3 years	07(48)	02(04)	Z=1.76 P-0.079
No fixed time	19(33)	51(88)	Z=7.35 P=0.000
Don't know	11 (19)	-----	-----
4. Preventive Methods			
Avoid further unprotected sex	53 (91)	58(100)	Z=2.34 P=0.019
Use condoms	47(81)	58(100)	Z=3.68 P=0.000
Avoid donating the infected blood	49(84)	58(100)	Z=3.26 P=0.001

Figure-1: Opinion about Health Education



Discussion

As our results indicate a significant improvement was found when we utilized the important resources, the school children as health messengers in the awareness of HIV/AIDS among their parents. There is tremendous impact on the awareness among parents by Health Education through their children.

One of the important modality to achieve health is by mass education. This needs to be initiated irrespective of social barriers like age, gender, religion, and economic status etc, through the methodology we followed in our study i.e by educating the children and using them as health messengers. Instead of utilizing children in commercial advertisement, child labor these abundant human resources can be used as health providers by training them to be Health Educators. We can greatly contribute to the present and future upliftment of health status of the community. As children play an important role in spreading health messages, we can utilize them while working positively towards Health for All. Thus when child becomes a teacher for spreading health messages it encourages children of school age to concern themselves with health, welfare and general development of their family members, neighbors, friends and the community at a large extent.

Conclusion and Recommendation

A significant improvement in the awareness of HIV/AIDS among parents was observed. There is tremendous impact on the awareness of HIV/AIDS among parents. One of the important modality to achieve health is by educating children. Health Education programs can be made more effective with the involvement of school children.

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