



AWARENESS OF JAUNDICE AMONG MOTHERS OF CHILDREN BELOW 10 YEARS OF AGE

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ABSTRACT

Aim - To assess the Awareness about jaundice among mothers having their children in the age group of below 10 years.

Materials & Method - Jaundice which is also known as icterus, is a known disease in the society and it may be seen all age groups. A pretested interviewer administered questionnaire will be circulated to 70 mothers of the children below 10 years of age regarding the etiology, signs and symptoms, effects of the disease and preferable treatment methodology.

Results- Overall 57.5% of the population are aware about the disease Jaundice, Whereas 42.5% of the population are unaware. The knowledge of the mothers who were aware was adequate in the aspect of identification and signs & symptoms. Inadequate knowledge among the unaware participants was seen in the aspects of etiology, danger signs and further medical complications of the disease.

Conclusion - Though a considerable amount of the population are aware about the disease Jaundice, more awareness is required, as it affects the Indian population most commonly.

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INTRODUCTION

Newborn jaundice is the yellowish discoloration of the skin, and mucous membrane occurring in a newborn as a result of increase in the level of serum bilirubin.^[1] Physiologic jaundice becomes visible on the second to third day, usually peaking between the second and fourth days at 5 to 6 mg/dl, and decreasing to below 2 mg/dl between the fifth and seventh days of life.^[2] In breastfeeding mothers, breast milk supply may be suboptimal in the first few days, exposing the infants to inadequate fluids and nutrition thus leading to a higher incidence of Neonatal jaundice.^[3,4] Neonatal jaundice (NNJ) is a common disorder worldwide affecting 30-70% of newborn infants.^[5-8] It is a frequent cause of hospitalization of babies in the first month of life^[9-11] It may be due to either conjugated hyperbilirubinemia or unconjugated hyperbilirubinemia.^[8,12,13] The degree of neonatal hyperbilirubinemia in the healthy newborn infant has been shown to depend on many factors including maternal race, maternal disease, gestational age, male sex, instrumental delivery, bruising, previous sibling with the history of neonatal jaundice, weight loss and breast feeding.^[14-22] The dangers of elevated levels of bilirubin in the newborn these include cerebral palsy, mental retardation, dental dysplasia, upward gaze paralysis and hearing loss.^[1] However, the latter condition occurs much more frequently and also leads to

brain damage (kernicterus) in severe circumstances.^[8,12,23] Kernicterus is characterized by bilirubin staining of the basal ganglia and involves diffuse neuronal damage.^[24] Pregnancy with jaundice is considered as a high risk pregnancy. Viral hepatitis is the most common cause of jaundice in pregnant women. Incidence of hepatitis varies greatly around the world. In developed countries, the incidence is around 0.1% whereas in developing countries it can range from 3-20% or higher. There is no difference in the course of the disease in pregnant and non pregnant women in developed countries. However, in developing countries, there is a higher incidence of maternal mortality with fulminant hepatitis. The various maternal complications associated with viral hepatitis are preterm labour, obstetric hemorrhage, fulminant hepatitis, hepatic encephalopathy, renal failure, DIC and death. The various foetal complications are prematurity and intrauterine risk of transmitting the hepatitis infection.^[25-27]

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A pretested interviewer administered questionnaire was framed regarding the knowledge about the term “ jaundice”, Awareness about neonatal jaundice, the viral causative agent, the signs and symptoms and the type of treatment methodology and it was circulated among 70 mothers who have their child in the age group of below 10 years. The 70 participants filled the questionnaire in a proper manner based on their knowledge and experience and the filled

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questionnaires were then statistically analyzed to generate appropriate results.

RESULTS

About the Neonatal Jaundice, 57% of the participants children had neonatal jaundice and they were aware about that, whereas 43% of them have not experienced it and they did not know about it. (Figure 1)

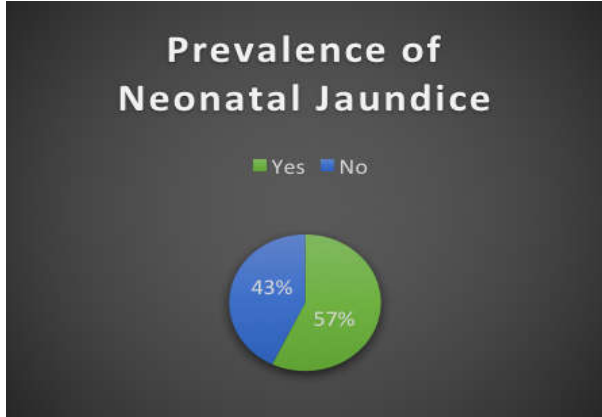


Figure 1

Based on the study, 34% of the participants knew that Anaemia may lead to Jaundice and remaining 66% of the participants were unaware.(Figure 2)

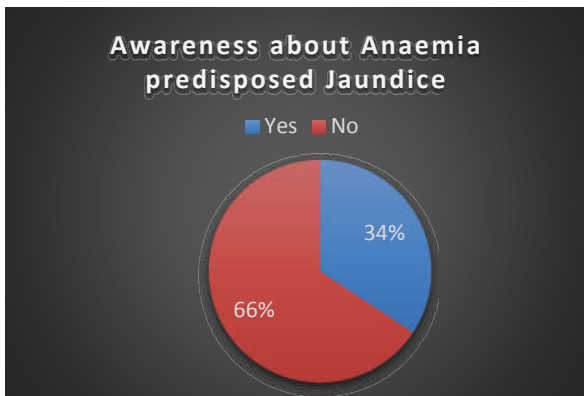


Figure 2

Based on the study, 56% of the participants were aware of the virus causing jaundice i.e., Hepatitis and 44% of them dint know about the viral infection.(Figure 3).

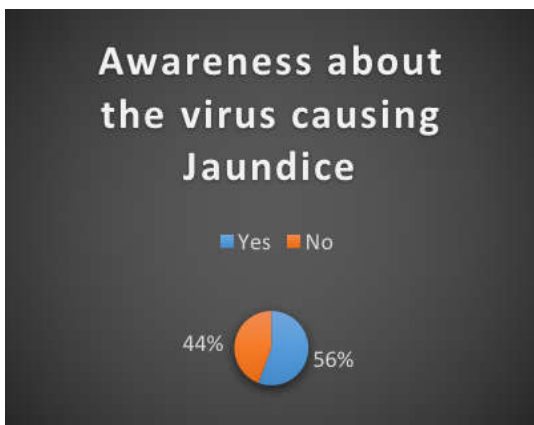


Figure 3

The participants knowledge about the signs and symptoms of jaundice were surveyed. Among which 97% of the population were able to identify the yellow tinge found over the skin and conjunctiva and 83% about dark urine, 75% have observed abdominal pain and 80% have seen fever and vomiting. (Figure 4)

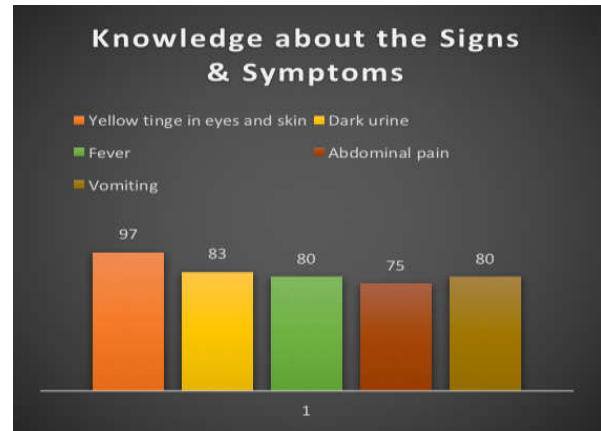


Figure 4

The treatment methodology most commonly preferred was surveyed and based in the result 60% of the participants prefer conventional home remedies to treat their jaundice affected child and 40% of them prefer Allopathic treatment methodology. (Figure 5).

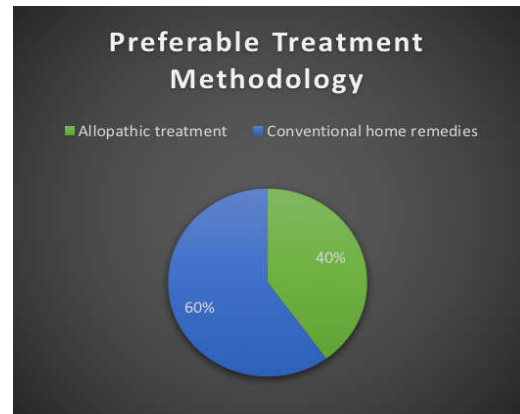


Figure 5

DISCUSSION

The present study observed that 57.5% of the total participants were aware of Jaundice. This is probably due to the literacy level observed among them. In the study it was seen that approximately 70% of mother populations were literate with majority of them having education up to middle level and 30% of population was illiterate. Similar literacy status was observed by Ashok *et al* [28] in 2006 after evaluating 8130 women attending antenatal clinics. It was important to note that a small proportion of the mothers had their source of information from the mass media, school, or from books. The knowledge of the mothers who were literate was adequate in the aspect of awareness, signs & symptoms. Inadequate knowledge about the causes, treatment, complications, and danger signs of Jaundice was seen among 42.5% of the total participated population & maybe coupled with various misconceptions about the condition that may adversely affect. There is a need therefore to teach pregnant women to be vigilant and watch out for jaundice on a

daily basis after the birth of their babies. This can be included in an information pamphlet to be given to all antenatal & postnatal clinic attendees. They must also be told during health talks when they meet up their gynecologist & their pediatrician.

CONCLUSION

Overall 57.5% of the population are aware about the disease Jaundice, Whereas 42.5% of the population are unaware. More awareness is required about the disease, as it affects the Indian population most commonly. Etiology of the disease may differ but the basic knowledge about the disease should be imparted to everyone in the general public especially to the women in the child bearing age and the mothers.

- Recommending health talks and information pamphlet on Jaundice should be given to all.
- Radio and television commercials can also be used to disseminate information on the condition to the general public so as to increase the depth of knowledge in the community.
- Awareness camps can be conducted in rural schools, so that the knowledge about the disease will be imparted successfully to the newer generation entering the society.

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