



TO STUDY KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE & PRACTICES TOWARDS IMMUNIZATION AGAINST HEPATITIS B VIRUS INFECTION AMONGST MEDICAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Background- Hepatitis B virus (HBV) it is double-stranded circular DNA virus and member of the Hepadnaviridae family of viruses.

Methods- This cross sectional study was done on 100 medical students from first year to fifth year were enrolled voluntarily to participate in this study. The objective, nature and benefits of this study were explained and informed written consent was taken from all participants. All students were interviewed structured self-completed questionnaires.

Results- 70% of participants knew that getting vaccinated offers a protection from infection for 15 years. 34% of final year students are aware that a titre value of more than 10 ml U/ml is needed for protection from Hepatitis B infection. 90% of students are willing to motivate others and encourage them to get vaccinated against Hepatitis B. 88% of students believe vaccination is needed even though we are taking precautionary measures when exposed to at risk cases. 60% of participants enrolled for the study are vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

Conclusion- This study highlighted the need to have medical graduates educated regarding significance of immunization against vaccine preventable hospital acquired infection like hepatitis and how vaccination can play in reducing morbidity and mortality among health care professionals.

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INTRODUCTION

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) it is double-stranded circular DNA virus and member of the Hepadnaviridae family of viruses.¹ Hepatitis B is an important cause of inflammation of the liver that is potentially life threatening as well as preventable. According to World Health Organization, 7.8 million people die each year from hepatitis B infection globally and another 240 million people are chronically infected (defined as positive HBsAg for minimum 6 months)². Nonetheless it's an important occupational hazard for health care professionals. However, through vaccination and safety measures, it can be prevented successfully. Bangladesh is in intermediate zone of prevalence of hepatitis B infection and the lifetime risk of acquisition of hepatitis B in these areas is 20 to 60 %³. In one study the prevalence of hepatitis B in Bangladeshi general population was 5.4% with a male predominance³. Vertical transmission, transmission through unsafe sex, unsafe injections and body fluid like blood remains the most common route of infection for hepatitis B virus⁴. Health-care workers have the highest occupational risk for hepatitis B infection.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross sectional study was done on 100 medical students from first year to fifth year were enrolled voluntarily to participate in this study. The objective, nature and benefits of this study were explained and informed written consent was taken from all participants. All students were interviewed structured self-completed questionnaires.

RESULTS

A total of 100 medical students responded to the questionnaire, 38% were female, and 62 % were male.

Table 1 Descriptive characteristics of the participants

Characteristics	No. of students	Percentage
Sex		
Male	62	62%
Female	38	38%
Marital status		
Married	99	99%
Unmarried	1	1%

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is an occupational health hazard preventable by vaccination. 90% of final year medical students know that Hep B is a vaccine preventable.

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70% of participants knew that getting vaccinated offers a protection from infection for 15 years. 34% of final year students are aware that a titre value of more than 10 ml U/ml is needed for protection from Hepatitis B infection. 90% of students are willing to motivate others and encourage them to get vaccinated against Hepatitis B. 88% of students believe vaccination is needed even though we are taking precautionary measures when exposed to at risk cases. 60% of participants enrolled for the study are vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

DISCUSSION

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is an occupational risk for health care professionals especially in developing countries which has a carrier rate of about 4%. Every year HBV infection accounts for 1.1 million cases. As such, incidence of HBV infection can only be brought down by giving proper education regarding its transmission and also getting medical students immunized with Hepatitis B vaccine. The number of students getting immunized showed an increase due to awareness created to them during their medical curriculum.

The present study concludes that there is an increased awareness among medical students regarding the need to be vaccinated against Hepatitis B. However all the students were not vaccinated against Hepatitis B, which make them vulnerable to the disease.

The reason as to why vaccination was not taken by few students needs to be addressed and make them realise the importance of vaccination. Since medical students are at increased risk of acquiring needle stick injury, and also due to increased prevalence rate of Hepatitis B in India, medical students should mandatorily be vaccinated upon entry into the medical college. It is recommended that a policy be in place for complete vaccination and health education of all medical students upon enrolling into MBBS course. Its also important to routinely check antibody titre and if its below 10 ml U/ml a booster dose be advised.

CONCLUSION

This study highlighted the need to have medical graduates educated regarding significance of immunization against vaccine preventable hospital acquired infection like hepatitis and how vaccination can play in reducing morbidity and mortality among health care professionals.

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