

KNOWLEDGE ON STIs, HIV/AIDS, PREMARITAL SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AMONG JANJATI ADOLESCENTS

Raj Kumar Yadav

Department of Population Education, TU, Thakur Ram Multiple Campus, Birgunj, Nepal
E-mail: rpsjyadav105@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper focuses on the knowledge of STIs, HIV/AIDS, and attitude on condom use with premarital sexual behavior among the Janjati adolescents of Pathlaiya, Bara district. The results show that knowledge on STIs and HIV/AIDS, use of condom and premarital sexual behaviour seemed high in the adolescents. Magar adolescents were found better regarding the knowledge on STIs, HIV/AIDS, attitude towards condom use and premarital sexual behavior in comparison to Tamang and Gurung adolescents. It is recommended that various awareness programme should be conducted to prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS among the Janjati adolescents.

Key words

STIs; HIV/ AIDS; STDs; premarital sexual behaviour; adolescents

Introduction

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections or diseases that are passed on during unprotected sex with an infected partner. This includes vaginal, anal or oral sex. Some STIs can be passed on by just skin-to-skin contact. Common STIs include: gonorrhoea, chlamydia, genital, and warts. Other less common STIs include: syphilis, hepatitis, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) which can lead to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

HIV/AIDS continues to affect many youth in sub-Saharan Africa- especially young women-

despite progress in prevention, testing, and treatment. An estimated 250,000 youth ages 15 to 19 were newly infected with HIV worldwide in 2015, with two out of three living in sub-Saharan Africa. Young women accounted for two-thirds of newly infected youth globally and three-quarters in sub-Saharan Africa. Young women are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because of gender-based violence and less access than young men to secondary school and economic opportunities. These factors hinder young women's ability to negotiate safe sexual practices and to access services for prevention and treatment. Empowering young

women through education and employment, and countering gender-based violence, are essential for prevention and early treatment (PRB, 2017).

With the HIV prevalence among the adult population (15-49) estimated at 0.20%, the HIV prevalence among the adults has not changed much over the last five years and has remained within the range of 0.2 - 0.3% in Nepal. It is estimated that currently there are around 39,249 people living with HIV in 2014, decreasing from 40,723 in 2013. An estimated number of 2,576 deaths were due to AIDS in 2014 declining from 3,362 deaths in 2013. The number of estimated deaths is projected to decline to 1,266 in 2020, due to an expected increase in the numbers of people on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART). The estimated number of new cases in 2014 is 1,493 as compared to 1,408 in 2013. The HIV epidemic remains concentrated among people who inject drugs (PWID), men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people (TG), sex workers (male and female) and male labor migrants (MLM) including their spouses (MoHP, 2015).

Gay *et al.*, (2016) cited that adolescence is a critical time during which many young people initiate their first romantic and sexual relationships and develop awareness of sexual orientation. Gender norms not only affect adolescent girls, but also young adolescent boys, as well as transgender adolescents. Sexual orientation and gender identity is a wide and fluid spectrum, not a lifestyle choice, and sexuality education programs in resource-rich and resource-poor areas have neglected to cover this topic (Plan, 2015). While there has been some success with livelihood interventions such as the IMAGE study (Kim *et al.*, 2009c), little research is available as well on the intersection of masculinities and livelihoods and how this informs HIV risk and how livelihood interventions could be gender transformative for men and boys (Gay *et al.*, 2016). At a consultation in Thailand in 2012, some young transgendered people reported

that they had unprotected sex to validate their gender identity and signify trust and love. Yet little or no support exists for these adolescents (Plan, 2015).

Jaiswal *et al.* cited (2005) HIV/AIDS has emerged as the single most formidable challenge to public health, human rights and development in the new millennium. UNAIDS estimates that 38 million people across the world are living with HIV/AIDS and out of which 61000 of these people are living in Nepal. In Kathmandu Valley, an estimate of HIV cases is about 8000 (6000-8000), the main groups being IV drug user (IDU) and client of female sex worker (FSWs) Nepal's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS is influenced by poverty, gender inequalities, low level of education and illiteracy, denial, stigma and discrimination. Nepal is fortunate in sense that it still has relatively few HIV/AIDS cases. However, there are already concentrated epidemics in the country. Immediate and vigorous action must be taken now to prevent further spread of HIV among groups at high risk and to stop the infection from taking a foothold in the larger population.

Adolescents worldwide are sexually active and tend to engage in risky sexual behavior. It is estimated that about 15 million adolescents aged 15 – 19 years give birth yearly, 4 million obtain abortion, and about 100 million become infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) annually. Globally, about 40% of all HIV/AIDS cases involve the youth aged 15 – 24 years and it is estimated that about 7000 youth are infected daily (UNAIDS, 2001).

Numerous studies have been conducted around the world to assess the knowledge on STIs, HIV/AIDS and premarital sexual behaviour among janjati adolescents, but similar works in the context of Nepal is very rare. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to evaluate the situation of STIs and HIV/AIDS among adolescents of Bara district pathalaiya province no. two of central Nepal.

Methods

Study area as well as adolescents were selected with the help of purposive sampling methods from Pathalaya of Bara district where the prevalence IDPs (Internal Displacement Persons), migrants and sexual activity were seen relatively too high. Those adolescents were selected who were able and seem to be interested to give their interview as well as those who had more information regarding topics which gave 100 adolescents from the janjati community by applying the direct interview method.

Results and discussions

Ethnic Composition of Adolescents

Bara district is one of having diverse geographical situation in the province no. two of Nepal where the study area is located; there is diversity in ethnical composition. The study focused on Janjati community adolescents only. They were Magar, Tamang and Gurung. Table 1 shows that out of 100 adolescents, 65 belongs to Magar caste followed by Tamang (27) and 8 adolescents belongs to Gurung.

Table 1: Ethnical composition of the adolescents

Ethnical composition	Number
Magar	65
Tamang	27
Gurung	8
Total	100

Adolescent's knowledge on STIs

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infections or diseases that are passed on during unprotected sex with an infected partner. This includes vaginal, anal or oral sex. Some STIs can be passed on by just skin-to-skin contact. Table 2 shows that out of 100 adolescents, 75 adolescents have knowledge on STIs. Among 75 adolescents, Magar (49), Tamang(20) and 6 adolescents belongs to Gurung. Table 2 also shows that among knowledge adolescents

mostly belongs to Magar caste.

Table 2: Adolescents' Knowledge on STIs

Knowledge	Adolescents			
	Magar	Tamang	Gurung	Total
Yes	49	20	6	75
No	16	7	2	25
Total	65	27	8	100

Adolescents' knowledge on HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS, a virus induced pandemic, is one of the most serious health concerns in the world today, because of its high case fatality rate and lack of a curative treatment or vaccine. Studies on the mode of transmission of AIDS have identified sexual intercourse, intravenous injections, blood transfusions and fetal transmission from infected mothers as some of the main routes of transmission of AIDS. Table shows that out of 100 adolescents, 91 adolescents have knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Among them Magar (59) followed by Tamang (25) and 7 adolescents belongs to Gurung. Table 3 shows that knowledge on HIV/AIDS seems high in Magar adolescent's comparison to Tamang and Gurung.

Table 3: Adolescents' knowledge on HIV/AIDS

Knowledge	Adolescents			
	Magar	Tamang	Gurung	Total
Yes	59	25	7	91
No	6	2	1	9
Total	65	27	8	100

Adolescents' attitude on condom use

Condom is one of the important means of family planning, STIs, STDs, HIV/AIDS prevention. Condom is still stigmatized so that adolescent hesitates to purchase. Other hand general people don't have positive attitude toward using condom use. Table 4 shows that among 100 adolescents, 66

adolescents reported that condom is useful means for prevention STIs, STDs and HIV/AIDS as well as help to manage their child birth. Among them Magar (43), Tamang (18) and 5 adolescents belongs to Gurung Community.

Table 4: Adolescents’ attitude on condom use

Attitude	Adolescents			
	Magar	Tamang	Gurung	Total
Yes	43	18	5	66
No	22	9	3	34
Total	65	27	8	100

Adolescent’s premarital sexual behaviour

If the sexual behaviors such as kissing, hugging, fondling breast, masturbation, intercourse occur between men and women irrespective of their age before he/she got marriage is called premarital sexual behaviors. Table 5 shows that out of 100 adolescents, 59 adolescents have premarital sexual behavior among them Magar (38) followed by Tamang (16) and only 5 adolescents have premarital sexual behavior.

Table 5: Adolescent’s premarital sexual behaviour

Premarital Sexual Behaviour	Adolescents			
	Magar	Tamang	Gurung	Total
Yes	38	16	5	59
No	27	11	3	41
Total	65	27	8	100

Adolescents’ knowledge on STIs (75) was same as compared to report of Poudel (2008). But ethnically Magar has high comparison to other. Similarly, adolescents’ knowledge on HIV/AIDS was high as compared to Jaiswal *et al.* (2005). Adolescents’ attitude on condom use was high as comparison to South African Family Practice (2010). In case of adolescents

premarital sexual behaviour was high as compared to study of Poudel (2008).

Conclusion

The results show that knowledge on STIs and HIV/AIDS, use of condom and premarital sexual behaviour seemed high in the adolescents. Magar adolescents were found better regarding the knowledge on STIs, HIV/AIDS, attitude towards condom use and premarital sexual behavior in comparison to Tamang and Gurung adolescents. It is recommended that various awareness programme should be conducted to prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS among the Janjati adolescents.

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