

Assessing the Level of Knowledge of Hepatitis C among Pakistani Students at University of Bedfordshire

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Abstract

Recent times have seen migration occurring on a large scale basis. This involves people from various parts of the globe emigrating for varying purposes. This migration has had a profound impact on public health and healthcare systems all over the world. Migration has become an essential determinant of public health. Currently Pakistan is ranked second highest, globally, for the prevalence of Hepatitis C within its population with current nationwide prevalence of hepatitis C is 4.8%. Due to the high prevalence of Hepatitis C in Pakistan and the fact that large numbers of Pakistani immigrants/students are travelling from Pakistan into the UK, there is a large potential of outbreak in the UK for the spread of hepatitis C. This serious and alarming correlation is taken as a base for this researchpaper.

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Introduction

Quantitative research method has been applied as it is the most suitable approach to carry out this study and to get the aims of this study [1,2]. Cross sectional, self-administered questionnaire survey has been followed as a research design to assess the level of knowledge about hepatitis C among Pakistani students at the University of Bedfordshire. The total number of Pakistani students who participated in this survey was 57 (29 males and 28 females). Sixteen students were from Peshawar, 15 from Lahore, 8 from Rawalpindi, 5 from Islamabad, 4 from Karachi 5 from Kotli and 1 each from Karak, Gujar Khan, Kohat and Mardan. The responses which determine the level of knowledge was analysed by software known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The software version was IBM SPSS Statistics 19. The statistical analysis which was performed at 95% Confidence Interval (C.I) and P values <0.5 were significantly considered. For statistical significance the Chi square test has been calculated.

Forty nine percent of the participants had heard of hepatitis C whilst 29% of the participants had some knowledge about hepatitis C. Most of the participants who responded positively and had better knowledge about hepatitis C were from Peshawar, which is the capital city of Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa. The participants (90%) from Lahore and Rawalpindi were not aware of hepatitis C. The participants under 25 years of age had poor knowledge of hepatitis C. Fifty per cent of the participants from Peshawar had better knowledge about different modes of transmission of hepatitis C. More than 90% of the participants

from Lahore and Rawalpindi did not know about different causes of spread of hepatitis C. Only 21% of the participants knew the fact that there is no vaccine against hepatitis C and seventy three percent did not know about the continent with highest prevalence of hepatitis C, only 14% correctly named Egypt with highest prevalence of hepatitis C. Findings of this study suggest that Pakistani students have less knowledge regarding hepatitis C. University of Bedfordshire management should work closely with recommended departments to arrange campaigns regarding hepatitis C awareness.

The recommendations are as follow:

The University of Bedfordshire Student Union: It is recommended for the University of Bedfordshire students union to organise hepatitis C awareness programs at least four times a year.

Pakistani student society: Pakistani student society works under the student union of the University of Bedfordshire. The Pakistani

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student society should arrange sports activities for students who come from Pakistan and name these activities in relation to hepatitis C awareness. There are many Pakistani doctors working in the NHS, Pakistani student should contact these doctors who can deliver lectures regarding hepatitis C awareness.

International office at University of Bedfordshire: International office in collaboration of Pakistani student society and University of Bedfordshire Student Union should arrange hepatitis C testing campaigns once a year especially for Pakistani students. International office should arrange hepatitis C awareness programs during induction sessions.

The Department of Public Health University of Bedfordshire: The department of Public Health should arrange activities where Public Health students and teachers are able to spread awareness regarding hepatitis C.

Mosques: There are places in the University of Bedfordshire where most Pakistani students offer prayers. Pakistani student society can use this place for hepatitis awareness.

UK Border Agency: UK Border Agency should ask/request international students for hepatitis C testing as part of their visa requirements before or upon entering UK borders.

National Health Service (NHS): The NHS should direct their hospital to work in collaboration with different universities in the UK and send universities invitation letters to ask their students to participate in different health related campaigns including hepatitis C.

Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

References

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