

Awareness about the HIV/AIDS in Different Socioeconomic Groups: A Cross-sectional Survey

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Abstract

Introduction: Today, India having largest number of people living with HIV/AIDS. India is the country with cultural and geographical variation and also have diverse lifestyle of the people in terms of socioeconomic status.

Aims and Objectives: to know the awareness status about the AIDS in different socioeconomic groups.

Materials & methods: The current cross-sectional study was carried out in a private clinic of Latur District. Total of 510 patients participated. A pretested questionnaire was used. Modified Kuppuswamy SES Scale (2012) was used for classifying socioeconomic groups. The chi-square test was used for analysis with significance level <0.05

Results: Present study shows that 97.20% population is aware about spread through sexual intercourse, 86.30% population is aware about transmission through blood transfusion and sharing of needles/syringes, & 87.27% population is aware of transmission through mother to child.

Conclusion: socioeconomic status of an individual plays an important role in the awareness of the HIV/AIDS, Upper and Middle Socioeconomic groups have shown more awareness than the lower.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, Socioeconomic Status

Introduction:

The epidemiology of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection in India has changed significantly, HIV/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a disease of far greater demographic diversity, affecting all ages, genders, races, and socioeconomic groups.¹ According to the UNAIDS and World Health Organization (WHO) Report 2010, there are approximately 33.3 million people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. Among the Indian states, Manipur has shown the highest estimate of the adult HIV prevalence of 1.4%, followed by Andhra Pradesh (0.9%), Mizoram (0.8%), Nagaland (0.78%), Karnataka (0.63%) and Maharashtra (0.55%).²

At present, its spread has been very rapid in India, having largest number of people living with AIDS.³ As India is the country with cultural and geographical variation and also have diverse lifestyle of the people in terms of socioeconomic status.⁴ Occupation of the individual also played an important role, around 50-90% seroprevalence rates of HIV is seen in the sex workers living in metro cities of India like Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai. Despite of use of the condoms this rate is increasing among sex workers.⁵

Research have shown that the socioeconomic status of the person plays important role in spread of HIV.⁶ Below poverty line peoples won't have access to the methods used for safe practices.⁷ Education and

awareness about the HIV also plays an important role in spread of HIV. Rural population in India is still neglected in terms of awareness and also in terms of access to the various methods used for safe practices.⁸ In contrary, higher socioeconomic status that is wealthier peoples are now a days prone to the drug usage, sex with multiple partners which increasing the risk of HIV in these particular population.⁹

Several studies were carried out to know the association between the socioeconomic status of an individual and its relationship with AIDS. HIV have been seen in both upper and lower socioeconomic status. It is necessary to evaluate and update the individual's knowledge about the same and to spread awareness.

The aim of the current study is to know the awareness status about the AIDS in different socioeconomic groups.

Materials and Methods:

The current cross-sectional study was carried out in a private clinic of Latur District. Total of 510 patients participated in the study from different socioeconomic groups. Out of which 264 were males and 246 were females in between the age group of 20-50 years. Informed consent was obtained from each individual.

Inclusion Criteria:

- ✓ Individuals between the age group of 20-50 years.
- ✓ Those who gave consent were included.

Exclusion Criteria:

- ✓ Those who denied to give consent.
- ✓ Those who are mentally retarded and severely ill patients were excluded from the study.

A pretested questionnaire¹⁰ converted into the regional language was filled by each participant asking about their personal information, socioeconomic status & questions related to knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Modified Kuppaswamy SES Scale (2012)¹¹ was used for classifying socioeconomic groups.

Statistical analysis was done by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 17), the groups were compared using the Chi square test. $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results:

Total of 510 patients who participated in the study 264(51.8%) were males and 246(48.2%) were females ranging from the age group of 20-50 years. The individuals was distributed according to the socioeconomic groups, most of them were from upper middle class. (Table no. 1)

Table no. 1: Distribution of the individuals according to socioeconomic groups.

Socio Economic Status	Frequency	%
Upper	94	18.4%
Upper Middle	148	29.0%
Middle/Lower Middle	107	21.0%
Lower/Upper Lower	85	16.7%
Lower	76	14.9%
Total	510	100%

It has been noted that all the 510 participants was aware of HIV/AIDS, and most of them have pertinent knowledge about it also. Almost all the people from the upper socioeconomic groups was aware that the AIDS will not spread from Hugging /Kissing/ or wearing clothes of compared to lower socioeconomic groups. P value shown highly significant results ($p = < 0.0001$) [Table no. 2]

It has been also seen that the most of the individuals are aware about the spread through transfusion of blood/ Sharing of needles/syringes with an HIV/AIDS infected person. Highly significant results was seen $p = < 0.0001$ [Table no. 3].

Almost 100% of the Upper class was known to the fact that HIV/AIDS spread through the sexual contact with HIV infected person and contrary to all other results lower economic status group also have good knowledge about the same. ($p = 0.2976$) [Table no. 4].

Table no. 5 demonstrate highly significant p value ($p < 0.0001$) indicative of Upper class have more knowledge about the spread of the HIV/AIDS through mosquito bite. [Table no. 5]

Knowledge of the spread from infected mother to child was also shown highly significant results with p value of < 0.0001 . [Table no. 6]

Table No. 2: Distribution of Individuals by Socioeconomic Status and Knowledge about Spread through Hugging/Kissing or Wearing Clothes.

Socio Economic Status	Hugging /Kissing/ or wearing clothes of HIV/AIDS positive person can spread HIV/AIDS				Chi square	P Value
	Total	Yes	No	Don't know		
Upper	94	15(15.95%)	71(75.53%)	08(8.51%)	72.95	<0.0001
Upper Middle	148	22(14.86%)	97(14.86%)	29(19.59%)		
Middle/Lower Middle	107	19(17.75%)	64(59.81%)	24(22.42%)		
Lower/Upper Lower	85	34(40.0%)	38(44.70%)	13(15.29%)		
Lower	76	39(51.31%)	18(23.68)	19(25.0%)		

Table No. 3: Distribution of Individuals by Socioeconomic Status and Knowledge about Spread through Transfusion of Blood/Sharing of Needles/Syringes.

Socio Economic Status	HIV/AIDS spread through transfusion of blood/Sharing of needles/syringes with an HIV/AIDS infected person				Chi square	P Value
	Total	Yes	No	Don't know		
Upper	94	90(95.74%)	01(1.06%)	03(3.19%)	65.59	<0.0001
Upper Middle	148	139(93.91%)	03(2.02%)	06(4.05%)		
Middle/Lower Middle	107	103(96.26%)	02(1.86%)	02(1.86%)		
Lower/Upper Lower	85	69(81.16%)	11(12.94%)	05(5.88%)		
Lower	76	49(64.47%)	15(19.73%)	12(15.78%)		

Table No. 4: Distribution of Individuals by Socioeconomic Status and Knowledge about Spread through Sexual Intercourse.

Socio Economic Status	Having sex with a HIV/AIDS positive man or woman can spread HIV/AIDS				Chi square	P Value
	Total	Yes	No	Don't know		
Upper	94	94(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	9.5546	0.2976
Upper Middle	148	145(97.97%)	1(0.67%)	2(1.35%)		
Middle/Lower Middle	107	105(98.14%)	1(0.093%)	1(0.093%)		
Lower/Upper Lower	85	82(96.47%)	1(1.17%)	2(2.36%)		
Lower	76	71(93.43%)	3(3.94%)	2(2.63%)		

Table No. 5: Distribution of Individuals by Socioeconomic Status and Knowledge about Spread through Bites of Mosquitoes.

Socio Economic Status	HIV/AIDS can spread through Bites of Mosquitoes				Chi square	P Value
	Total	Yes	No	Don't know		
Upper	94	02(2.13%)	81(86.17%)	11(11.70%)	96.026	<0.0001
Upper Middle	148	01(0.68%)	120(81.08%)	27(18.24%)		
Middle/Lower Middle	107	05(4.68%)	61(57.00%)	41(38.32%)		
Lower/Upper Lower	85	07(8.24%)	37(43.52%)	41(48.23%)		
Lower	76	12(15.78%)	25(32.90%)	39(51.32%)		

Table No. 6: Distribution of individuals by socioeconomic status and knowledge about spread from infected Mother to child.

Socio Economic Status	Can HIV/AIDS spread from infected Mother to child				Chi square	P Value
	Total	yes	No	don't know		
Upper	94	91(96.80%)	01(1.07%)	02(2.13%)	53.6355	<0.0001
Upper Middle	148	142(95.94%)	04(2.70%)	02(1.35%)		
Middle/Lower Middle	107	97(90.65%)	07(6.54%)	03(2.80%)		
Lower/Upper Lower	85	73(85.89%)	08(9.41%)	04(4.70%)		
Lower	76	51(67.10%)	19(25%)	06(7.89%)		

Discussion:

In the present study, it has been seen that the most of the population belongs to the middle socioeconomic group. The study was aimed to know the impact of education, social status and also the economic status on the awareness regarding the AIDS. As these all three factors plays an important role in the determining awareness of the individual. The current population was selected as it is the more prone population for getting the infection. It has been exposed to the sexual activities, blood transfusion and also mother to children transmission can take place in this particular age group. The study was undertaken to evaluate the same.

It has been seen that the Upper socioeconomic group have more knowledge and awareness about the HIV/AIDS as compared to that of Lower socioeconomic group of Latur District. It has been also noted that the awareness percentage in the lower socioeconomic group is also good. The development of the social media in India might be a factor for the same.¹²

Present study show similar findings with study done by Yadav SB et al which shows that 92.42% of the study population knew that the disease was

transmitted through sexual intercourse, 91.11% knew about transmission through blood transfusion, 87.84% & 83.66% knew about transmission through the sharing of needles/syringes and transmission of HIV from mother to child respectively. Similarly present study shows that 97.20% population is aware about spread through sexual intercourse, 86.30% population is aware about transmission through blood transfusion and sharing of needles/syringes, & 87.27% population is aware of transmission through mother to child.

Study done by Sogarwal R. shows that the relationship between HIV knowledge and socio-economic exist and higher levels of education and wealth increase the likelihood of awareness about HIV. Similarly results of present study also shows the similar results and more knowledge in upper socioeconomic groups than lower.

Despite of the fact that socioeconomic status plays an important role in awareness of the HIV/AIDS the impact of urban & rural area should have been taken into the consideration while performing the study and also the re-evaluation of the subjects can have been done by making the aware about their misconceptions.

Conclusion:

Present study has shown that the socioeconomic status of an individual plays an important role in the awareness of the HIV/AIDS, Upper and Middle Socioeconomic groups have shown more awareness than the lower. Still there are many issues and misconception is there about HIV/AIDS in lower socioeconomic groups, attention needed to be given on the lower socioeconomic groups which can be improved by reaching the grass root level of the community and by undertaking the Health Education programs and awareness camps.

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