Original paper

Community Knowledge and Attitudes towards Pulmonary Tuberculosis in Kirkuk

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Abstract

B ackground: Tuberculosis is one of the primary public health problems in developing countries. Knowledge about the disease has been known to increase the risk of spreading the bacteria and the risk of developing the disease.

Objectives: The objective of this study was to assess the level of Tuberculosis knowledge, attitudes among population in Kirkuk city.

Subjects and Method: A community based cross-sectional study using structured questionnaire, 400 respondents were asked questions regarding cause, symptoms, method of transmission of pulmonary TB and their attitude to person infected with pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Results: Most of respondents had heard of pulmonary Tuberculosis with males having better (though not significant) knowledge than females. Although attitude toward TB did not influence caring for sick relatives or friends, it impeded social interactions and marriage prospects with infected persons within the community

Conclusion: Knowledge and attitude toward pulmonary Tuberculosis was generally good in this community. Efforts should be intensified by health authorities in the local government to raise awareness and knowledge of the disease, so as to improve social perception and early recognition of infection.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Pulmonary tuberculosis, Kirkuk city.

Introduction

Tuberculosis (TB) is chronic а granulomatous bacterial disease mainly caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the disease is mainly transmitted through air droplet containing bacilli and inhaled healthy individuals, though bv TB primarily affects the lung, it also affects any parts of the body including kidneys, intestine, brain, bone and lymph nodes ^{(1).}

TB is a public health problem in many developing countries, the world health organization (WHO) reported that there were 8.8 million incident cases of TB in 2010⁽²⁾, with rising numbers of human immune deficiency virus (HIV) infections and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) case there is a threat of resurgence of TB^{(3).}

Globally the disease kills 5000 people daily with 98% of the deaths occurring in developing countries mostly affecting young adults in their in their productive years ^{(4),} among the 15 countries with the highest prevalence rate, 13 are in Africa which accounts for 31% of global total, more so as countries in the sub-Saharan region are experiencing great burden of HIV infection, increasing the risk of TB infection in these African countries ^{(5).} The control of TB depends mainly on case Direct-Observed management using Treatment Short courses (DOTS) Regimen, DOTS as strategy entails that medications is taken in the presence of care provider⁽⁶⁾, DOTS was launched in 1995 as the main strategy in the control of $TR^{(7)}$.

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Certain local practices and belief and failure to recognize symptoms early may delay the diagnosis and hence increasing the spread of the disease in the community ⁽⁸⁾, TB is often associated with Stigmatization and thus may create resistance among patients to seek proper diagnosis and treatment ^{(9).}

It is important for the community members to know and realize the symptoms of the disease in order to seek treatment properly ⁽¹⁰⁾, In a community with a low level of awareness about the cause, mode of transmission and preventive methods the spreading of TB could be high ^{(11).}

Iraq has a high burden of TB and ranks 44th worldwide among countries with a high TB burden and 7th among the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The estimated incidence of all TB cases based on a total population of 22.9 million was at least 135 per 100 000 in the year 2001 ^{(12, 13).}

In 2001 a total of 10 478 TB cases were notified, which corresponds to a case notification rate of 48 per100 000, and means that Iraq can be categorized as a country with a medium level notification rate $^{(14, 15)}$.

In 2012, 2,760 new pulmonary sputum smear positive TB cases were detected against a targeted 3,360 (11/100,000 of the population), with an 82% achievement of the target in comparison with 69.8% achievement in 2011. ^{(28).}

The aim of this study was to determine community knowledge and attitude towards pulmonary TB in Kirkuk city.

Subjects and Methods

This is a community-based descriptive cross-sectional study done in Kirkuk city from the period of 20th October 2013to 1st April 2014, a total of 400 person interviewed, in the hospital (relatives of patients), in the primary health care centers visitors, in the markets and general populations in Kirkuk city respondent socio-demographic characteristics (age,

gender, education, marital status and religious) were recorded.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires; the questionnaires were prepared in English and local languages questions were prepared (Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish).

The knowledge of the correct cause of pulmonary Tuberculosis (PTB) was assessed. A score of one (1) was given to the correct response (bacteria), and zero (0) for the incorrect response and I do not know response, only respondents who were ever heard of TB were asked knowledge questions. A score of 1 was assigned to a response that represented a good attitude for the question, and a score of 0 for poor attitude

Regarding the attitude of people towards PTB, respondent were asked whether patients with PTB should participate in social functions and allowed in public places.

Descriptive data were represented as tables, Chi-square test was used to examine statistical associations between variables and level of significance set as P<0.05.

Results

Four hundred persons participated in the study. Socio-demographic characteristics are shown in table (1) mean age distribution was 33.2 year.

Regarding the cause of TB, 266 (66.5%) of respondents knew the cause to be bacteria. Virus (38%), cold (39%) smoking (51.5%), alcohol (41.5%), and dust (43%) were incorrectly mentioned as causes of PTB as well as shown in table 2.

Table 3 show that 316 (79%) respondents knew prolonged cough, 303 (75.7%) blood stained sputum, 271(67.7%) chest pain, 265(66.2%) fever, less commonly weight loss 258(64.5) and night sweating 238 (59.5%) to be symptoms of PTB.

Cough and sneeze from someone infected with the disease was correctly mentioned as mode of transmission by a greater proportion of respondents, 319 (79.7%). Fewer respondents knew hereditary (48%), sharing drinking utensils (18.5%), body contact (27.8%), drinking raw milk (22.8%) were not methods of transmission of PTB. (58.7%) respondents said a pregnant woman can transmit PTB to her unborn child as shown in table 4.

A greater proportion of respondents said the PTB is a treatable disease and can be prevented by vaccination. (61.2% and 62%, respectively), with regard to attitude toward persons with PTB, while a greater proportion where against the acceptance of persons with PTB in social function and public places (50.7% and 51%, respectively) as shown in table 5.

Table 6 show that the association between educational level of respondents and their knowledge of correct cause of PTB is not statistically significant (P>0.05).

The association between the gender of respondents and their knowledge of correct cause of PTB was not statistically significant (P>0.05) as shown in table 7.

Table 1	. Socio-demo	graphic chara	cteristics of resp	ondents in Kir	kuk city in 2013-2014
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Variable		Frequency No.	Percentage %
	<30	231	57.75
	30-39	62	15.5
	40-49	51	12.75
Age(years)	50-59	40	10.0
	≥60	16	4.0
	Male	202	50.5
Sex	Female	198	49.5
	Married	173	43.25
Marital state	not married	227	56.75
	Not educated	25	6.25
	Primary	48	12.0
Educational level	Secondary	95	23.75
	Tertiary*	232	58.0

*Tertiary: college or institute.

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Causes	Yes		No		I don'	t know	Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bacteria	266	66.5	87	21.75	47	11.7	400	100.0
Virus	152	38.0	177	44.25	71	17.7	400	100.0
Cold	156	39.0	166	41.5	78	19.5	400	100.0
Poor nutrition	190	47.5	136	34.0	74	18.5	400	100.0
Smoking	206	51.5	126	31.5	68	17.0	400	100.0
Alcohol	166	41.5	155	38.7	79	19.7	400	100.0
Dust	172	43.0	136	34.0	92	23.0	400	100.0
Poor sanitation	190	47.5	109	27.2	101	25.2	400	100.0

Table 2. Respondents knowledge about cause of PTB*

***PTB:** Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Table 3. Respondent's knowledge of symptoms of PTB

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Symptoms	Yes		No		I don't know		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Prolonged cough	316	79.0	46	11.5	38	9.5	400	100.0
Blood stained sputum	303	75.75	54	13.5	43	10.75	400	100.0
Fever	265	66.25	59	14.75	76	19.0	400	100.0
Weight loss	258	64.5	71	17.75	71	17.75	400	100.0
Night sweat	238	59.5	65	16.25	97	24.25	400	100.0
Chest pain	271	67.75	76	19.0	53	13.3	400	100.0

Table 4. Respondent 5 knowledge of method of transmission of 1 1 D								
	Yes		No		I don	't know	Total	
Method of transmission	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cough and sneeze from	314	79.7	41	10.3	40	10.0	400	100.0
infected person								
Hereditary	120	30.0	192	48.0	88	22.0	400	100.0
Sharing drinking utensils	245	61.3	74	18.5	81	20.2	400	100.0
Contact with body clothes,								
sweating of infected persons	223	55.7	111	27.8	66	16.5	400	100.0
Drinking raw milk	215	53.7	91	22.8	94	23.5	400	100.0
Mother to child transmission	235	58.7	80	20.0	85	21.3	400	100.0

Table 4. Res	nondent's	knowledge	of method	of tran	smission	of PTB
	pondent 5	monteage	or memou	ortran		

Table 5. Respondent's knowledge ab	out the management and the	ir attitude towards persons i	nfected
	with PTR		

with								
Variable	Yes		No		Ι	don't	Total	-
					know			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
PTB is a treatable disease?	245	61.2	65	16.3	90	22.5	400	100.0
There is a vaccine for PTB?	248	62.0	45	11.3	107	26.7	400	100.0
Person with PTB shouldn't be allowed to participate in	203	50.7	129	32.3	68	17.0	400	100.0
social function?								
Person with pulmonary TB shouldn't be allowed in	204	51.0	142	35.5	54	13.5	400	100.0
public place?								

Table 6. Educational level of respondents as predictor of the knowledge of correct cause of PTB

	Educational level	Knowledge l	level	Total
		Poor	Good	
	None	12	13	25
	Primary	25	23	48
	Secondary	51	44	95
	Tertiary	46	186	232
	Total	134	266	400
\mathbf{X}^2	df = 46.6 df = 3	p>0.05		

Table 7. The gender of respondents as predictor of the knowledge of correct cause of PTB

Sex		Knowled	Knowledge level		
		Poor	Good		
Male		138	64	202	
Female		128	70	198	
Total		266	134	400	
$X^2 = 0.451$	df=1	P>0.05			

Discussion

TB continues to present significant morbidity and mortality in low income countries in spite of effective and available treatment. Poor knowledge about the cause, mode of transmission, and as symptoms, well as appropriate treatment of TB not only affect the healthseeking behavior of patients, but also could affect control strategy, thereby

sustaining the transmission of the disease within the community^{.(16)}

The present study aims at gaining an insight into the level of awareness about various aspects of TB among the general population of Kirkuk city. The study showed that the majority of people had heard of PTB.However, findings from this study show that more men were aware. This might probably be as a result of a greater contact of men in the study area with the health facilities compared with

women. The higher knowledge of PTB among men than women has also been documented in other studies. (17, and 18) and in this study may be as a result of the higher level of education in men than women, even as the study also showed that educational level influenced knowledge. The study also showed that highly educated were the more awareness of information on TB for the majority. However, as much as they create the awareness of PTB, gaps in knowledge still exist, as about two-thirds of respondents knew the cause of TB to be bacteria, and 51.1% mentioned cigarette smoking as a causative agent. The poor knowledge of bacteria as a cause has also been demonstrated in other studies, ^{(19, 20, and} $^{21)}$ and needs to be addressed as misconceptions about the cause may affect treatment seeking behavior. The mention of smoking as a cause may not be unconnected to the higher incidence of respiratory disease among smokers, and their higher knowledge of cough as a symptom, a finding also reported in other studies^{. (22, 23, 24)}

Encouragingly, majority of the respondents were aware that PTB is treatable. This is important as compliance with treatment is one of the pivots of effective therapy. The poor attitude toward persons with PTB in this study has similarly been reported in an earlier study' ⁽²⁵⁾ and signifies a stigmatization of the disease and those who suffer from it. Such stigmatization has been identified in studies carried out in South Africa and India^{. (26, 27)}

Conclusion and Recommendation

Majority of respondent had heard of PTB, however gaps exist in their knowledge of etiology, mode of transmission and manifestation of PTB with the generally having a better knowledge of PTB. Health educators in the local government should intensify campaigns to educate people about PTB, disseminating information to correct identified misconceptions and improve community perception of the disease. Other route of information disseminating such as the media should be encouraged to play a more active role in enlightenment campaigns in order to enhance the success of the control strategies and subsequent elimination of PTB.

Acknowledgements

Greater thanks for the students for help us: Mustafa Adnan Hamdi, Hawre Ahmed Muhammed Ameen and Nazli Nail Hakki.

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