



ISSN: 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## Attitude And Knowledge Of Midwives Towards Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Positive Patients

Neelam Saleem Punjani

Literature Review

Attitude and Knowledge of Midwives towards Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Positive Patients

### Abstract:

An infectious disease like HIV is continues to grow in developing countries and worldwide. It is a major global public health issue, which puts a heavy burden on health care needs. According to the World Health Organization global summary of the AIDS epidemic (2011) globally 30.4 million of people living with HIV out of them prevalence of adult is 30.7 million, prevalence of women is 16.7 million, whereas 30.7 million is the prevalence of children < 15 years of age. According to UNAIDS (2008) report in the Asia-Pacific, Pakistan is the country with high prevalence people infected with HIV among 11 countries. Prevalence of HIV in Pakistan is approximately doubled from 11% in 2005 to 21% in 2008. According to Ilyas et al. (2011) in Pakistan, in young people the conducive behaviours to the spread of HIV infection are curiosity of sex, drugs, negative peer pressure, and economic frustration. Also, Pakistan was initially considered as the low prevalence country. However, Pakistan is now facing HIV epidemic among high risk populations like injecting drug users (IDUs). Nurses and Midwives are at forefront in spending considerable time taking care of the HIV positive patients who are admitted to hospitals. Midwives are considered to play a pivotal role whose task is to promote sexual and reproductive health and to prevent reproductive illnesses. Hence, it is important to explore the knowledge of midwives about HIV and their attitudes and willingness to take care of them in order to improve the quality of care.

**Key Words:** Knowledge, Attitude, Midwives, HIV, Pakistan

### 1. Research Question

The research question was formulated according to PICO strategy that represents population, intervention, comparison and outcome.

What is the knowledge level and attitude of midwives towards HIV positive patients?

### 2. Key Research Questions

- What is the level of Midwives knowledge regarding HIV?
- What kind of attitudes midwives have regarding HIV positive patients?
- What kind of association is found between midwives knowledge and their attitudes towards HIV?

### 3. Aim/ Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to write an in-depth analysis and synthesis of current literature to explore knowledge levels related to symptoms and transmission of HIV and to describe attitudes of midwives towards HIV positive patients. A systemic and comprehensive literature review would be presented in this paper in a thematic manner with argumentation and in-depth analysis. Moreover, critical appraisal and identified gap would be presented with the strengths, limitations, and summarization of the literature review.

### 4. Method/ Search Strategy

A comprehensive and systematic literature search was conducted to review and analyze the existing literature on the subject. Initially, the search was started from internet search engine, and Google scholar was selected. Key words used Knowledge, Attitude, Midwives, and HIV which gave 9,040 hits. The limits were set for the year 2000-2013; it gave 590 hits. Titles of the searched articles were reviewed; 2 articles were found relevant to the topic.

A database search of Cumulative Index for Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PubMed and MEDLINE was conducted using the Medical Subject Heading (MeSH). Abstracts and conferences proceedings were excluded. PubMed was searched first by combining MeSH terms. Limits were set for journal articles, Year 2000-2013 and free full text articles. The titles and abstracts were reviewed; as a result, 4 articles were extracted on the selected topic. Another data based explored was CINAHL

in which keywords with Boolean operator used were: Knowledge, Attitude, Midwives, and HIV. To have more specific results the limits were set for year 2000-2013, journal articles, and full text. Titles were reviewed and 8 articles were selected. Out of all the search results, 6 articles were relevant and extracted. Almost all the studies found were from West; none of the studies have been conducted for midwives in Pakistani context. From MEDLINE one Pakistani study was selected, 3 relevant articles were same as CINHALL. During literature search, I found an unpublished thesis on the relevant topic which is also utilized in synthesis. In order for searching more relevant studies ancestry approach was followed and citations from the searched articles were used to track down other studies on the similar topic. The search strategy resulted in 13 studies for review published over last 13 years. Each article was reviewed and organized according to the research question. The search strategy is summarized in Appendix A.

### **5. Critical Review (Analysis, Synthesis And Argumentation) Of The Literature**

As HIV significantly impacts individual's sexual and reproductive health, provision of health for people living with HIV is important as well as access to information on reproductive health is also essential (Nordkvist & Allvin, n.d.). This would help preventing HIV transmission and improving the quality of life of people living with HIV. Midwives role is important in the promotion of sexual and reproductive health, which needs clear perceptions, positive attitude and adequate level of knowledge among them. However, there is a lack of research particularly in the domain of midwifery therefore studies exploring knowledge and attitude of nurses and medical students are also included in order to identify the gap. Following themes were identified from critical analysis of literature review. All the studies are quantitative mostly cross sectional with the variety of tools used for studies.

### **6. Knowledge of Nurses towards care of HIV Positive Patients**

Knowledge about HIV transmission and prevention is the most commonly occurring theme and was identified in almost all of the studies. Among Vietnam midwifery students and Nigeria health workers, one of the major causes of negative attitudes, reluctance and fear to care for people with HIV was acknowledged as lack of education. (Nordkvist & Allvin, n.d.; Reis et al., 2005). Also in Pakistan a study on medical students indicated very low knowledge scores with accordance to the essential symptoms of HIV (Shaikh, Khan, Ross & Grimes, 2007). Similarly, a study conducted by Khan, Unemo, Zaman and Lundborg (2009) revealed that Pakistani health care professional of Lahore have low level of knowledge and practices resulted in poor attitude towards treating patients with HIV. On the other hand, Earl and Penny (2003) found that education and knowledge of HIV resulted in more positive attitude towards caring for HIV positive patients.

These results contrast with the findings of study conducted in Greece by Ouzoni and Nakakis (2012) they found out that overall the HIV knowledge of the student nurses of Greece was fairly good and they displayed positive attitudes towards HIV positive patients. Though, 76.7% i.e., majority of participants stated that they hadn't been taught about HIV in nursing schools. These findings of appropriate level of knowledge about HIV among health care workers are supported by studies conducted in rural India (Kermode, Holmes, Langkham, Thomas, & Gifford, 2005), South-east of England (Veeramah, Bruneau, & McNaught, 2008) and Southern Nigeria (Umeh, Essien, Ezedinachi, & Ross, 2008). Therefore it can be synthesized from literature that there is a need to educate midwives with biomedical knowledge of HIV along with ethical and cultural issues surrounding HIV.

### **7. Fear Of Contracting HIV**

Health care professional's fears of contracting patients with HIV for whom they are caring was the other more repeatedly occurring theme of the reviewed studies, and was noted in studies through different continents and cultures. Study conducted in Greece by Ouzoni and Nakakis (2012) revealed that there are some transmission myths among health care professionals as they believed that HIV can be contracted through mosquitoes, toilet seat, swimming pools, sharing cigarettes, hugging, and though coughing and sneezing. Also 63% of the health care workers of rural India perceived high risk of contracting occupational infection patients and Among 266 nurses 91% of participant believed that they are at high risk of occupational injuries (Kermode, Holmes, Langkham, Thomas & Gifford, 2005). In the study of Juan (2004) he found that due to the lack of knowledge and fear of contracting HIV 19.3% of Taiwanese nurses were leaving nursing.

In contrast, Nordkvist & Allvin (n.d.) in their study concluded that 98.1% of the midwifery student in Vietnam knew that HIV cannot be spread by shaking hands and sharing spoons and plates. These findings were supported by Veeramah, Bruneau, and McNaught (2008) who found out that nurse and midwives in England have good knowledge in regard to contracting HIV. Nevertheless, as HIV continues to raise midwives and other health care professionals need to have in depth knowledge in order to avoid misconceptions.

### **8. Reluctant To Care For People With HIV**

The primary reasons identified from the literature review for the reluctance to care for patients with HIV were lack of knowledge and fear of infection. In a study conducted in Greece 43.7% of the nurses were willing to care for people with HIV (Ouzoni & Nakakis, 2012). The similar findings were also showed in a study conducted in southern Nigeria that very low percentage of health care professionals cared for HIV patients in last 12 months which proposed that they are reluctant to care for HIV patients (Umeh, Essien, Ezedinachi, & Ross, 2008). Rondal et al. (2002) found that nurses showed empathetic attitudes towards HIV patients and had less fear of contagion whereas, 37% of nurses would have refused to care for HIV patients. While Veeramah, Bruneau, and McNaught (2008) found out that 91% of the nurses and midwives in England were willing to care for HIV patients. Though, willingness to provide care to HIV positive patients in rural India was highly associated with having previously cared for HIV patients (Kermode, Holmes, Langkham, Thomas, & Gifford, 2005). This can be anticipated from reviewed articles that due to the lack of knowledge, fear and reluctant to care for HIV patients could hinder in making professional relationship with patients. This issue can be overcome through educational programmes as, Pital et al. (2007) in a study established that 6 days training programme on HIV significantly decreases fear of contacting with HIV positive patients.

### **9. Stigma Associated With HIV**

Stigma is defined by Gernov (2005) as a social construct which separates out a person by virtue of physical or social behaviour which results in negative attitudes such as avoidance and discrimination. People with HIV faces stigma like homosexual, they are labelled as injecting drug users or commercial sex workers. More than one third of Midwifery students of Vitenam believed that they do not prefer to care for HIV positive patients due to stigma no matter 85% of them are aware that health care professionals are not suppose to discriminate HIV positive patients (Nordkvist&Allvin, n.d.). Moreover, Reis et al. (2005) found out that 8% of the health workers in Nigeria believed that it is the complete waste of recourses if treating someone with HIV. This stigma and negative attitude is associated with the lack of adequate knowledge in HIV treatment and ethics. Rondhal, Innala, and Carlsson (2003) concluded in his study that HIV patients faced stigma as they are considered as homosexuals and they don't get quality of care. Also, stigmatization of patients with HIV in a study of Chan, Stoove, Sringernyung, and Reidpath (2007) is statically major obstacle in provision of care in Thailand. However, in Thailand commercial sex is more tolerated and less stigmatized while injecting drug users are highly stigmatized.

### **10. Critical Appraisal And Gaps**

After in-depth critical review of literature; it is identified that very limited researches have been done on a particular topic in Asian or Pakistani context. Moreover, there is a scant of research from Midwifery perspective. As Pakistan is a country in transition in terms that HIV cases increases day by day; it is highly significant to conduct research on this topic. It is the duty of every health care professional to provide care without discrimination. Therefore, it is important to get adequate knowledge and show positive attitude towards HIV positive patients.

It is also vital to know the knowledge level and attitudes of midwives towards HIV positive patients so that the midwives can be trained through specific HIV knowledge to overcome the fear and reduces stigma for HIV patients. Moreover, educating students midwives about HIV knowledge of preventing and curing the disease and ethics will also help to overcome the reluctance of taking care for HIV patients

### **11. Restatement Of Research Question And Philosophical Underpinning**

After reviewing the literature; my research question according to PICOT strategy is: What are the perceptions, knowledge level, and attitudes of midwives and factors influencing these attitudes towards HIV positive patients in a tertiary care setting of Karachi, Pakistan? Hence, mixed method i.e., quantitative and qualitative both can be utilized to gain in-depth knowledge in which a questionnaire can be used to assess knowledge level of midwives and I would conduct an interview with midwives to verbalize their attitude and explore the perceptions of how various factors are affecting their care towards HIV positive patients.

### **12. Strengths And Limitations**

Review of international articles assist to widen a broader understanding of the phenomena faced in the nursing world. Scant knowledge of health care professionals about HIV and negative attitude towards HIV positive patients needs urgent attention to include HIV education in midwifery curriculum. While each of the reviewed articles has certain weaknesses like most of the studies were carried out in one university or hospital. Further limitation is that different methods and instrument were used which limits the generalizability of the findings. Further studies on the topic with qualitative approach would achieve a deeper knowledge. Moreover, as mentioned above there is a lack of research in midwifery context particularly in Asian and Pakistani context therefore, studies exploring knowledge and attitude of nurses and medical students are also included in order to identify the gap.

### **13. Conclusion**

This literature review revealed that there is a deficiency in the knowledge and there are some false beliefs existed among midwives and other health care professionals about HIV resulted in negative attitudes. Therefore, Midwives need to be knowledgeable in reproductive and sexual health issues including HIV issues. This can be achieved by updated knowledge in relation to HIV, overcoming their fears and attitudes, and building confidence for caring HIV patients. Moreover, there is a need to improve the awareness about HIV and HIV patient care through training programme in order to clear the misconceptions of midwives so that HIV positive patients can get compassionate care without discrimination.

Moreover, midwives working in hospitals need to be supported with knowledge and should have enough supplies to take universal precautions while caring for HIV positive patients. Pisal et al. (2007) proposed that it is expected that in context of low resources, the lack of proper medical supplies, lack of sufficient protection and inadequate knowledge about HIV will keep on contributing to prejudiced behaviours towards HIV positive patients.

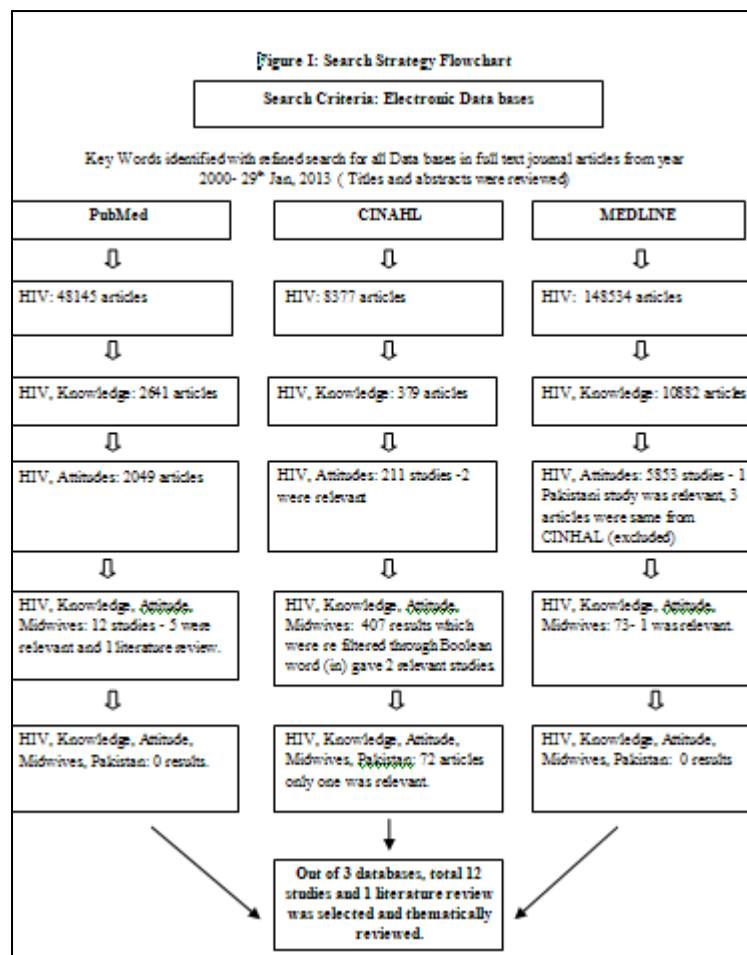


Figure 1

#### 14. References

- Chan K.Y., Stoope M.A., Sringernyung L. & Reidpath D.D. (2007) Stigmatization of AIDS patients: disentangling Thai nursing students' attitudes towards HIV/AIDS, drug use, and commercial sex. *AIDS and Behavior* 12(1), 146–157.
- Earl C.E. & Penny P.J. (2003) Rural nursing students knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about HIV/AIDS: a research brief. *Journal of The Association of Nurses in AIDS Care* 14(4), 70–73.
- Germov J. (ed.) (2005) *Theorising Health: Major Theoretical Perspectives in Health Sociology*. In *Second Opinion: An Introduction to Health Sociology*, 3rd edn. Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 28–50.
- Juan C.W, Siebers .R, Wu .F.S, Wu .C.J, Chang Y.J, Chao C. 2004. The attitudes, concerns, gloving practices and knowledge of nurses in a Taiwanese hospital regarding AIDS and HIV. *International Journal of Nursing Practice* 10: 32–38.
- Kermode, M., Holmes, W., Langkham, B., Thomas, M. S., & Gifford, S. (2005). HIV-related knowledge, attitudes & risk perception amongst nurses, doctors & other healthcare workers in rural India. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 122(3), 258.
- Khan, M. S., Unemo, M., Zaman, S., & Lundborg, C. S. (2011). HIV, STI prevalence and risk behaviours among women selling sex in Lahore, Pakistan. *BMC infectious diseases*, 11(1), 119.
- Muhammad, I., Sultan, A., Liaqat, A., Masaud, S., Sadaf, B., Muhammad, S., & Aleena, S. A situational analysis of HIV and AIDS in Pakistan. *Virology Journal*, 8.
- Nordkvist, H. & Klingberg Allvin, M. (n.d.). Knowledge, perceptions and attitudes among midwifery students towards HIV/AIDS in Vietnam. Retrieved from <http://ki.se/content/1/c6/11/28/43/Helena%20Nordkvist.pdf>
- Ouzouni, C., & Nakakis, N. (2012). HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of student nurses. *Health Science Journal*, 6(1), 129-150.
- Pickles, D., King, L., & Belan, I. (2009). Attitudes of nursing students towards caring for people with HIV/AIDS: Thematic literature review. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 65(11), 2262-2273.
- Pisal, H., Sutar, S., Sastry, J., Kapadia-Kundu, N., Joshi, A., Joshi, M., Leslie, J., Scotti, L., et al. 2007. Nurses' Health Education Program in India Increases HIV Knowledge and Reduces Fear. *Journal of the Association in AIDS care*. 18(6): 32-43.
- Reis, C., Heisler, M., Amowitz, L. L., Moreland, R. S., Mafeni, J. O., Anyamele, C., & Iacopino, V. (2005). Discriminatory attitudes and practices by health workers toward patients with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. *PLoS medicine*, 2(8), e246.

13. Rondhal.G ,Innala.S, Carlsson.M . 2003. Nursing staff and nursing students' attitudes towards HIV-infected and homosexual HIV-infected patients in Sweden and the wish to refrain from nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 41(5): 454-461.
14. Shaikh, F. D., Khan, S. A., Ross, M. W., & Grimes, R. M. (2007). Knowledge and attitudes of Pakistani medical students towards HIV-positive and/or AIDS patients. *Psychology, health & medicine*, 12(1), 7-17.
15. Umeh, C. N., Essien, E. J., Ezedinachi, E. N., & Ross, M. W. (2008). Knowledge, beliefs and attitudes about HIV/AIDS-related issues, and the sources of knowledge among health care professionals in southern Nigeria. *The journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 128(5), 233-239.
16. UNAIDS. (2008). 2008 Report on the global AIDS epidemic. World Health Organization. Retrieved from [http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2008/jc1511\\_gr08\\_executivesummary\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/GlobalReport/2008/jc1511_gr08_executivesummary_en.pdf)
17. Veeramah, V., Bruneau, B., &McNaught, A. (2008). Exploring knowledge and skills on HIV in student nurses and midwives. *British Journal of Nursing*, 17(3), 186-191.
18. World Health Organization Report on global summary of the AIDS epidemic (2011) retrieved from <http://www.who.int/hiv/data/en>