

HIV/AIDS Awareness Of Auto Rickshaw Drivers In Ludhiana City. Punjab – India

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Abstract

Research Question- What is the level of Knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS in Auto rickshaw drivers?

Objective- To assess the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among Auto rickshaw drivers.

Study Design- Cross- sectional

Study Sample- 600 Auto rickshaw drivers

Statistical Analysis – Percentages, Chi Square, Odd's Ratio

Results – Out of total 600 Auto rickshaw drivers, 384 (64.0%) had heard about HIV/AIDS. Awareness level increased with increase in educational status. Out of 384, 74.2% drivers knew that unprotected sex is the main mode of transmission. TV (63.0%) was the common media as source of information. Only 36.2% knew that the disease is not curable.

INTRODUCTION

HIV / AIDS is a serious challenge for the developing as well as developed world. In a span of two decades, since its first identification, HIV infection has become a pandemic and has posed a formidable challenge to mankind. Based on the revised estimates, HIV prevalence in the country was 0.36% in 2006¹. AIDS prevention strategy largely depends on health education and behavioral changes based on AIDS awareness among the population which has started showing its results in India where the prevalence has shown slight decline in the recent past.

Awareness constitutes the cornerstone of all intervention endeavors for HIV transmission, more so in case of high risk groups.

Auto rickshaw drivers are a unique segment, in that by virtue of their work they come into contact with large number of people and can therefore act as agents spreading key

messages about HIV/AIDS to the general public.² With this perspective the present study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among auto rickshaw drivers in Ludhiana city.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The study was conducted on auto rickshaw drivers who were currently driving the vehicle. Seven main points of Ludhiana city were identified. Out of 1050 auto rickshaw drivers contacted, 600 agreed to participate. The knowledge about HIV/AIDS was assessed by using structured interview schedule. The interview schedule mainly focused on studying the awareness about modes of transmission, source of information, curability of disease and blood testing. The data collected were analyzed by using SPSS 16.0 software.

RESULTS

Table- I reveals that 59.3% of the auto rickshaw drivers were in 21 to 40 years age group while the elder population was

only 4.2%.

61.7% were native Punjabis while 38.3% were immigrants. Majority of the auto rickshaw drivers (65.8%) had education from primary to Matric, 25.3 % were illiterate and only 8.9% were graduates. 461(76.8%) auto rickshaw drivers were married. Out of total 600 auto rickshaw drivers, 384 (64%) had heard of HIV/ AIDS. Out of 185 subjects in 31-40 yrs age group, 141(76.2%) had heard about HIV/AIDS. The percentage of subjects who had heard about HIV/AIDS increased with increase in age except those above 50yrs of age in which the sample size was small. The observed difference was found to be highly significant ($\chi^2=46.51$, $df=5$ $P<0.000$). Education level had significant impact on the knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS among Auto rickshaw drivers. All the auto rickshaw drivers who were educated above Matric had heard about HIV/AIDS. Majority of the native Punjabis knew about HIV/AIDS (OR 3.11 95% CI: 2.17-4.48). Of the 461 married Auto rickshaw drivers, 322 (69.8%) knew about HIV/AIDS (OR 2.88 95% CI: 1.91-4.33).

Figure 1

Table 1: Profile of Auto Rickshaw drivers who had heard about HIV/AIDS

Variable	Auto rickshaw drivers n=600		Subjects who had heard about HIV/AIDS n=384		Statistical Analysis
	N	%age	N	%age	
Age(yrs)					
<20	54	9.0	25	46.3	$\chi^2=46.51$, $df=5$ $P<0.000$
21-30	171	28.5	98	57.3	
31-40	185	30.8	141	76.2	
41-50	123	20.5	92	74.8	
51-60	42	7.0	21	50.0	
61 & above	25	4.2	7	28.0	
Education:					
Illiterate	152	25.3	57	37.5	$\chi^2=125.22$, $df=5$ $P<0.000$
Primary	123	20.5	59	48.0	
Middle	155	25.8	111	71.6	
Matric	117	19.5	104	88.9	
Senior	43	7.2	43	100.0	
Secondary Graduate	10	1.7	10	100.0	
Ethnicity:					
Punjabi	370	61.7	274	74.1	OR=3.11 95% CI:2.17-4.48
Non Punjabi	230	38.3	110	48.0	
Marital Status:					
Married	461	76.8	322	69.8	OR=2.88 95% CI:1.91-4.33
Unmarried	139	23.2	62	44.6	

Table II indicates that out of 384 Auto rickshaw drivers, 74.2% knew that unprotected sex is the commonest mode of transmission. Infected blood and injections as mode of transmission was responded by 67.4% & 57.5% respectively. 15% subjects had misconceptions that even hand shaking; sharing clothes can spread AIDS while 26% said that mosquito bite can also spread AIDS

Figure 2

Table 2: Knowledge of Auto rickshaw drivers regarding Modes of transmission.

Mode of transmission	Number of subjects* (n= 384)	Percentage
Unprotected Sex	285	74.2
Infected Blood	259	67.4
Injections	221	57.5
Mother to child	176	45.8
Sharps	109	28.4
Handshaking	58	15.1
Sharing Clothes, Food	57	14.8
Mosquito	100	26.0

* Total of the column is more because of multiple responses

The study subjects were asked about the source of information regarding their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. TV was the main source of information as responded by 63% of them (Table III). 34.9% auto rickshaw drivers stated that they received information from friend followed by 25.5% through newspapers & posters. Other sources of information included health workers, Neighbors, Radio etc.

Figure 3

Table 3: Source of Information about HIV/AIDS.

Source of information	Number of subjects* (n=384)	Percentage
TV	242	63.0
Friend	134	34.9
Newspaper, books & poster	98	25.5
Doctor	24	6.2
Others	48	12.5

* Total of the column is more because of multiple responses

Regarding the curability of the disease, 36.2% (1/3rd) correctly responded that disease is not curable (Table IV). 68.7% auto rickshaw drivers were in favour of getting blood tested for HIV in routine.

Figure 4

Table 4: Knowledge regarding Curability and Blood Testing

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Curable	98 (25.5)	139 (36.2)	147 (38.3)
Blood Test Necessary	264(68.7)	63 (16.4)	57(14.8)

DISCUSSION

In this study, it was found that 64.0% of Auto rickshaw drivers had heard about HIV/AIDS against 97.2% of awareness reported in study done among Truck drivers in Maharashtra in 2006³. In a study conducted in Aurangabad city of India, 88.0% Auto rickshaw drivers knew about HIV/AIDS.⁴

Awareness level increased with increase in education level. In the present study, 74.2% were aware that unprotected sex

is the main mode of transmission whereas in the study done among Auto rickshaw drivers in Aurangabad , 100% subjects knew about sexual transmission of the disease ₄ . In a study done in Maharashtra , 94.69% truck drivers had knowledge of transmission by heterosexual route ₃ . In a study done in Chennai in Auto rickshaw drivers, 46.0% were aware of one correct way of transmission ₂ .

TV was the main source of information of HIV/AIDS in the present study. Similarly TV was considered the most common source (70.0%) in study done in Auto rickshaw drivers in Aurangabad city ₄ .

In this study, only 1/3rd of Auto rickshaw drivers were aware about the incurability of the disease. Whereas in similar study done in Auto rickshaw drivers in Aurangabad, 51.1% knew about non curability of the disease.

Conclusion- In the present study, two third of Auto rickshaw drivers had heard about HIV/AIDS. Awareness level increased with increased level of education. So, the most viable and acceptable step would be to increase the education and awareness about this disease in the general population.

References

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