

## Symptomatic Knowledge on Sexually Transmitted Disease

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### Abstract

Patients with symptomatic gonorrhea infection or other STDs are commonly seen in outpatient departments. These patients may or may not be aware of their disease. Majority of them seek treatment without having adequate understanding regarding the nature of their condition. It is important for a healthy community that the members have information regarding STDs, their spread and preventive measure.

**Keywords:** Sexually transmitted disease; Gonorrhea; Knowledge; Pelvic inflammatory disease

### Introduction

Gonorrhea is a globally prevalent sexually transmitted disease in both men and women [1]. The causative organism is a gram negative bacterium 'Neisseria Gonorrhea' [2]. Commonest symptoms in men are burning micturition and penile discharge. In the female, it is either because of asymptomatic or symptomatic causes vaginal discharge and pain [2]. Majority of asymptomatic cases may go undetected so serial screening is recommended. If the gonorrhea is untreated or undertreated it can transform into a more serious disease affecting epididymis, joints, heart and female reproductive organs [3]. Children born with mother with gonorrhea are at a higher risk of ocular infections that can lead to blindness [4]. In addition it can facilitate other STIs like HIV, Chlamydia to infect. The gold standard diagnostic test for gonorrhea is culture, which is highly sensitive and specific [5].

The usual modes of transmission are through vaginal, anal or oral sex. 2 Women have much higher risk of getting infected with gonorrhea (60-80%) as compared to males (20%) with a single act of vaginal intercourse with an infected partner [6,7].

World Health Organization (WHO) estimates' that annually 62 million new cases of gonorrhea occur worldwide. According to the (CDC), in the United States alone, 820,000 new cases of gonorrhea occur and the most common population affected are teenagers, young adult and African American. Gonorrhea remains the second most frequent bacterial sexually transmitted infection in the United States [8-10].

Gonorrhea can be prevented by consistent use of condoms during sex and avoiding multiple sexual partners. It is being recommended to be in a sexual partnership with a person who has been tested negative for STD to avoid the transmission of the disease. If a patient tests positive for one STD he /she should be tested for other STD and secondary precaution should come underway [11].

Knowledge about the disease can decrease the incidence of transmission of STD by decreasing the rate of risk taking behavior especially in the adolescents [12]. Educational institution programs regarding sexual health have shown promising results to prevent the risks of sexually transmitted diseases [13].

### Discussion

Gonorrhea and other STDs are commonly seen in medical offices. In our study majority of the patients with a history of STD have not heard about pelvic inflammatory disease which is an important complication

of gonorrhea and some other STIs. In a similar study conducted in the United States, it was observed that only one third of the patients with history of STD, never heard of pelvic inflammatory disease. The high rate of unfamiliarity to the disease's major complication could be due to low educational level, less health orientation and limited medical facilities as compared to the developed countries [14].

In our study only 12 percent of the patients could identify the complications of gonorrhea other than Pelvic inflammatory disease, while Whiteside et al showed that only 20 percent of the patient could recognize the complication of the Gonorrhea other than PID [14].

Regarding knowledge of clinical sign and symptoms of Gonorrhea, only 9 percent of participant in this study had correct knowledge regarding them, in some contrasting results, in a study by Biro et al, it was concluded that 66.6 percent of the patients knew the symptoms and signs of gonorrhea [14].

In this study majority of the participants (60.7 %) thought that avoiding multiple partners and spouse relation is the best method for preventing STI, followed by using condom (20.7 %) while only 6.6 % didn't know any method to prevent STI. In a study conducted in the United States, 18% of the patients mentioned condoms as a way to prevent STD while 57 % respondents did not know any method. In another study conducted in Nigeria by Miriam et al, demonstrated that the method choice (most effective) for preventing STD is use of condom followed by abstinence [15,16]. The trend in spousal sexual relationship and avoiding multiple partner could be due to the social and religious norms of the local culture prevalent in Pakistan where the major religion plays a basic role in social dynamics of the society and religion has a strong influence on daily aspects of life of a common citizen and prohibits extra marital relationships [17].

In this study, females were found more educated on overall knowledge regarding Gonorrhea the reason could those female adolescents discuss more sexuality topics with the parents and are more concerned regarding pregnancy hence learn more reading female sexual health [18].

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## Conclusion

This study acknowledges a great need of education of patients regarding Gonorrhea and other sexually transmitted infections, as majority of the participant were not aware of complications, clinical symptoms and mode of transmission of Gonorrhea. Furthermore research is much needed to evaluate the reasons of visible gap in the knowledge of Gonorrhea.

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