

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING SELECTED VAGINAL INFECTIONS AMONG WOMEN RESIDING IN SELECTED AREAS OF PUNE CITY

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ABSTRACT

The study titled " A Descriptive study to assess the knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections among women residing in selected areas of Pune city " aimed to assess the knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections among women. The knowledge levels among the participants varied the A significant majority, 90%, of the samples demonstrated excellent knowledge on the topic. A smaller portion, 8.66%, had good knowledge. Only 1.33% of the samples exhibited poor knowledge.

Vaginal infections such as bacterial vaginosis (BV), candidiasis, and trichomoniasis significantly impact women's health, causing both physical and emotional distress. BV results from an imbalance in vaginal bacteria, with symptoms like discharge and a fishy odor, while candidiasis arises from fungal overgrowth, causing itching, swelling, and discharge. Trichomoniasis, a sexually transmitted infection, manifests through frothy discharge, itching, and discomfort. Left untreated, these infections can lead to severe health outcomes, including increased susceptibility to HIV and adverse pregnancy effects. Despite their prevalence, gaps in diagnosis, treatment, and awareness persist.

This study assesses the knowledge of vaginal infections among women in Pune city, aiming to identify the association between knowledge levels and demographic factors. Using a descriptive research design and a quantitative approach, data were collected from 300 women aged 18–60 years through a structured questionnaire. Participants' knowledge was classified as poor, moderate, or excellent. The tool's validity and reliability were rigorously tested ($r = 0.842617$).

The study highlights critical gaps in women's understanding of vaginal infections, emphasizing the need for targeted education and awareness programs. Preliminary findings from similar studies suggest that factors like education level, socio-economic status, and prior exposure to reproductive health education significantly influence awareness. This research underscores the importance of improving diagnostic tools, enhancing community-based education, and reducing the stigma associated with vaginal infections.

By addressing these gaps, the study seeks to improve women's health outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and promote informed practices to prevent and manage vaginal infections effectively.

Keywords - descriptive study, assess, knowledge, vaginal infections, women,

INTRODUCTION

Many women frequently encounter vaginal infections that can result in and various health issues. Bacterial Vaginosis, occurs due to an imbalance in the natural vaginal bacteria. Normally, the vagina has more beneficial lactobacilli, but in BV, harmful bacteria like Gardnerella vaginalis multiply excessively. Symptoms often include a thin, gray-white discharge with a noticeable fishy smell, particularly after sex. Some women, though, may not show any symptoms. BV can heighten the chances of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and problems during pregnancy, such as giving birth prematurely.

Yeast infection, known as candidiasis, mainly results from *Candida albicans* growing excessively. This fungus naturally exists in small quantities in the vagina. Factors like using antibiotics, having high estrogen levels, unmanaged diabetes, or a weakened immune system can prompt this overgrowth. Symptoms often involve severe itching, redness, swelling, and a dense, white discharge resembling cottage cheese. Unlike BV, candidiasis typically lacks a noticeable smell.

Trichomoniasis is an STI caused by the tiny organism *Trichomonas vaginalis*. It's the most frequent curable STI. Symptoms experienced by women may include a bubbly, yellow-green vaginal discharge that has a strong odor, as well as itching, discomfort during intercourse and urination, and inflammation of the vaginal area. However, up to 70% of infected people may not have symptoms. If not treated, trichomoniasis can lead to issues like a higher chance of HIV infection and bad outcomes during pregnancy.

Diagnosing these infections usually includes checking the pelvic area, running lab tests, and assessing symptoms. Treatment options vary: Bacterial Vaginosis is often treated with antibiotics like metronidazole or clindamycin, candidiasis with antifungal drugs such as fluconazole, and trichomoniasis with antiprotozoal medications like metronidazole or tinidazole. Keeping the vagina healthy through good hygiene habits, safe sexual practices, and avoiding unnecessary antibiotics can aid in preventing these infections.

NEED OF STUDY

Vaginal infections are common issues affecting millions of women worldwide. However, these conditions are not extensively studied and are frequently misdiagnosed or treated inadequately. This study is crucial due to various factors that emphasize the substantial impact of these infections on women's well-being.

These illnesses are linked with significant illness. Bacterial vaginosis, the most prevalent vaginal illness, has been connected to a higher chance of pelvic inflammatory disease, negative pregnancy results, and vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV. Candidiasis, although typically seen as less serious, can lead to repeated and long-lasting symptoms that greatly reduce life quality. Trichomoniasis, a sexually transmitted disease, not only causes troubling symptoms but also raises the risk of HIV spread and negative pregnancy results.

Public health knowledge and awareness show a big gap. Many people are misdiagnosed and treat themselves, often misusing antibiotics and antifungal medications. This misuse can cause resistance to develop and infections to come back again. It emphasizes the necessity for better diagnostic tools and clearer treatment guidelines to manage these conditions effectively and correctly.

The economic and social effects of these infections cannot be overlooked. They result in substantial medical expenses from frequent trips to doctors, tests, and therapies. Additionally, the emotional and societal weight is worsened by the shame and emotional strain linked to these infections, impacting women's mental health and social welfare.

It is crucial to gain a more profound grasp of the spread, mechanisms, and microorganisms involved in BV, candidiasis, and trichomoniasis. This knowledge can guide the creation of focused actions, such as improved ways to diagnose, new treatments, and successful ways to prevent these infections.

This study is necessary because of the widespread occurrence and substantial health impact of vaginal infections, the deficiencies in current methods for diagnosing and treating them, and their economic and social effects. Conducting thorough research to tackle these issues could enhance women's health results and lower medical expenses.

AIM OF THE STUDY

Aim of the study is a descriptive study to assess the knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections among women residing in selected areas of Pune city.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a non-experimental, descriptive design and used a quantitative research approach to assess participants' understanding. The study included 300 people, with participants selected through a non-probability purposive sampling method from selected areas in Pune city. A structured knowledge questionnaire was developed to assess the knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections among women. The tool's reliability and validity were confirmed through expert review and a pilot study. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews, focusing on demographic variables and knowledge-related questions. The sample population included women aged 18 to 60, with varying educational and occupational backgrounds

RESULTS

1) Analysis of data related to demographic variables

The demographic distribution of the 300 samples is summarized as follows:

The distribution of ages within the sample indicates that the largest group of women, comprising 40.66%, fell within the 18 to 27 age range. Next, 31.33% were from the 38-47 age bracket, while 26.66% were aged 28 to 37. Only 1.33% belonged to the 48- 60 age group, highlighting a greater presence of younger participants in the study.

In terms of education, 45.33% of the women had completed secondary education, making it the most common level of educational attainment. This was followed by 35.66% who had higher secondary education, 10% with primary education, and 9% who were graduates or held higher qualifications, showing a predominance of women with secondary and higher secondary education

The occupational status of the women showed that 42.66% were homemakers. making this the largest group. This was followed by 29% of women who were employed, 28% who were self-employed, and only 0.33% who reported other types of occupations, reflecting a significant proportion of homemakers in the sample.

When considering family monthly income, the highest percentage of women, 38.33%, belonged to families earning ₹15,001-20,000. Families with an income of 220,001- 30,000 accounted for 27.66%, followed by 25.33% in the ₹10,000-₹15,000 range, and 8.66% with

incomes exceeding 230,000, suggesting that most participants came from middle-income households.

Marital status distribution indicated that 46.66% of the women were married, making them the majority. This was followed by 29.33% who were unmarried and 24% who were divorced, with no women in the sample reporting themselves as separated.

In terms of awareness about vaginal infections. 74% of the women had some level of information, while 26% were unaware. Among those informed, 45.04% relied on the internet as their primary source, 27.02% received information from relatives, 16.66% referred to books, and 11.26% gathered knowledge from other sources, indicating the internet as the dominant medium of information.

Overall, this distribution provides a comprehensive view of the participants in terms of age, education, occupation, income, marital status, and awareness about vaginal infections, highlighting significant demographic and socioeconomic trends

2) Analysis of knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections among women.

n=300

Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Poor knowledge	4	1.33%	16.11	2.72
Moderate knowledge	26	8.66%		
Excellent knowledge	270	90%		

Table no – 1 show that, the data highlights the distribution of knowledge levels among the sample group regarding selected vaginal infections:

Excellent Knowledge: A significant majority, 90%, of the samples demonstrated excellent knowledge on the topic.

Good Knowledge: A smaller portion, 8.66%, had good knowledge.

Poor Knowledge: Only 1.33% of the samples exhibited poor knowledge.

This distribution indicates a strong overall understanding of vaginal infections within the studied population, with only a minimal gap in awareness.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Vaginal infections are common among women and can result from various causes, including bacterial imbalances, fungal overgrowth, or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). These infections often lead to symptoms such as itching, burning, unusual discharge, or discomfort. Common types include bacterial vaginosis, yeast infections, and trichomoniasis. Factors like poor hygiene, hormonal changes, antibiotic use, or unprotected sex can increase the risk. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment are crucial to prevent complications and maintain vaginal health.

The aim of the present study was a descriptive study to assess the knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections among women. After taking collecting data from 300 people result shows that, majority 40.66 % of the women is 18 – 27 of age group, majority 45.33 % of the women were educated upto secondary, majority 42.66% of the women were home maker, majority 38.33 % of the women’s family monthly income is 15001 – 20000, 46.66 % of the women’s marital status is married, majority 74 % of the women have information about vaginal infection.

90%, of the samples demonstrated excellent knowledge on the topic. A smaller portion, 8.66%, had good knowledge. Only 1.33% of the samples exhibited poor knowledge.

Related research was done to assess knowledge of Vaginal infections among female college students at Delhi. Reveals that 50% of students having great understanding, 35% has excellent understanding, 15% had poor understanding regarding Vaginal infections in female college students, which suggests a significant portion of the students possess good knowledge about vaginal infections, but there's still a need to address the knowledge gap among the remaining 15%.

A study was done on Women's Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Vaginal Yeast Infection, the results revealed that 96% of the studied women had unsatisfactory level of knowledge regarding vaginal yeast infection and about 77% of them had a negative attitude regarding hygiene and personal habits to prevent vaginal yeast infection.

CONCLUSION

In this study, quantitative research approach was use. Using non-probability sampling technique, 300 people were selected from selected areas of Pune city who had fulfilled the inclusion criteria of the study in order to assess the knowledge regarding selected vaginal infections. The reliability of tool was done on 30 participants in selected areas of Pune city, the value was 0.8426 and tool found reliable. The present study provides valuable insights into the understanding of selected vaginal infections among women in Pune. While the overall knowledge scores were relatively high, the lack of significant associations between demographic factors and the level of knowledge suggests that awareness campaigns and educational initiatives should be designed to be inclusive, catering to people across diverse age groups, educational backgrounds, and occupations. This comprehensive approach is essential to ensure that the necessary information and support reach all people, addressing the existing gaps in knowledge and empowering them about selected vaginal infections.

In conclusion, while the majority of people possess an excellent understanding of selected vaginal infections. The absence of a significant relationship between demographic factors and knowledge indicates that education programs should target all people, regardless of their demographic background, to ensure equitable and comprehensive awareness of selected vaginal infections.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

We, researchers, understand that conflict of interest refers to situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise our judgment in evaluating, conducting, or reporting research. We hereby declare that we do not have any personal conflict of interest that may arise from our application and submission of our research proposal.

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