KNOWLEDGE AND RISK BEHAVIOR ON HEPATITIS C INFECTION AMONG THE LABORATORY HEALTH WORKERS IN KATHMANDU NEPAL

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ID NO: 0080200163

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
NORTHERN UNIVERSITY BANGLADESH
APRIL 2009

This dissertation entitled **"KNOWLEDGE AND RISK BEHAVIOR ON HEPATITIS C INFECTION AMONG THE LABORATORY HEALTH WORKERS IN KATHMANDU NEPAL"** is submitted to the department of Public Health, **NORTHERN UNIVERSITY BANGLADESH** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Health during the academic session 2008/09. Submitted on April 27, 2009

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Chairman and all the members of the Dissertation Defense Committee for their approval of the topic of my dissertation which enabled me to conduct this study.

I offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to Dr G.U. Ahsan PhD, Professor and Adviser of the MPH program, NUB and my course teacher for Research Methodology and Epidemiology for his scholarly teaching, guidance and encouragement which inspired and helped me throughout my dissertation work from designing to submission of the report.

My sincere thanks and profound regards I offer to Dr Shahanaz Chowdhury, Assistant Professor and Head of the department MPH program, for her enthusiastic and stimulating teaching, sincere co-operation, personal attention and inspiration which helped me in both professional as well as administrative aspects of my study.

My greatest gratitude, respect and genuine thanks goes to Dr Jesmin Akhter, senior lecturer MPH program NUB and Supervisor for this study, for her unforgetful cooperation, valuable guidance at every step of this study.

My sincere gratitude and thanks go also to Dr Nadira Mehriban, Assistant professor, and Dr Hayatun Nabi, Lecturer for their professional guidance, cooperation and support in my study process.

Additionally I would like to express my gratefulness to Dr Tajul Islam and Dr Jahriul Karim, Guest faculty of MPH program NUB, for their expertise in statistics and providing valuable guidance in analytical part of this study.

My deep appreciation and thanks go to all the participants of this study for their kind support and for their enthusiasm.

My sincere thanks and deep appreciation go to Dr Rabindra Pandey and Dr Sudhir Khanal for their valuable guidance, and to my friends Dr Binod Shah, Mr R C Shedain , Mr Lokendra Bhandari, Mr Kishore Bhandari and Ms Rama Khadka for their support during data collection.

My heartiest thanks go to all my colleagues, Mr Anil Khadka, Dr Sharmin Ferdous, Dr Khalilur Rahaman, Dr Abdhullah Bin Akhter and Mr Chitra Bahadur Oli for their friendly behavior and support.

I would like to express my heartiest thanks to Ms Lindsay Friedman for her moral support and valuable guidance in conducting this study and preparing this report.

Last but not least I have to express appreciation of my respected father Mukunda Prasad Ghimire, my mom Radhika Ghimire and my brother Sanjaya Ghimire, who provoked me, inspired me and provided creative environment to manage this degree.

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ABSTRACT

The analytical cross-sectional study was conducted among laboratory health workers in Kathmandu, Nepal, to assess their knowledge and risk behavior on hepatitis C infection. The study was conducted according to the triangular method of: Face to Face Interviews by using pre-tested semi structured questionnaires; Focus Group Discussions (FGD) by using prepared guidelines; and Observation by using observation checklists. Data were collected from 160 lab health workers, of whom 74 were working in government and 86 in private health institutes. Three FGDs were held and 20 Observations made (10 in government and 10 in private health institutes). Data were analyzed in terms those working in government and those in private health institutes.

A total of 160 respondents were interviewed of whom 46 percent were from government institutes and 54 percent from private institutes. Most of the respondents, 67 per cent, were male, of whom 63 percent were of the 20-30 yrs age group. The median age of the respondents from government and private institutes were 29 yrs and 24yrs respectively. Among the total respondents 73 percent was Lab Assistants. Out of these, 66 percent were from government institutes and 79 percent from private institutes. Of government respondents 47 percent had 5-10 yrs working experience whereas 70 percent of respondents from private institutes had working experience of less than 5 yrs.

It was found that knowledge of respondents about hepatitis C was generally high with 87 percent revealing good levels. Findings from FGDs also suggested that most of the respondents had good knowledge of hepatitis C. Of respondents from government institutes 99 percent had good knowledge of hepatitis C and 77 percent of respondents

from private institutes equally good. There was significant p=0.00(<0.05) association between level of knowledge and type of health institutes. Thus knowledge level among respondents of government is higher than that of private institutes.

Risk behavior of total respondents showed that approximately one third (33%) demonstrated high risk behavior. Of these, 34 percent were from government and 31 percent from private institutes. Findings from Observation revealed that 40 percent of health workers in government institutes showed high risk behavior whereas only 10 percent of health workers in private institutes indicated high risk behavior.

The study revealed that 68 percent of the respondents who had good knowledge had low risk behavior and 67 percent of the respondent who had poor knowledge also had low risk behavior. That is, there was no significant p=0.93 (p>0.05) association between level of knowledge and risk behavior. Thus knowledge has no effect on behavior.

Policy should be implemented to improve the high risk behavior of lab health workers. Under the programme “Behavior change communication” all health workers, regardless of their knowledge of hepatitis C, should be trained in appropriate behavior to ensure the control of hepatitis C infection within laboratories.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS:	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ELISA:	Enzyme linked immunoglobulin sorbent assay
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
HAV:	Hepatitis A Virus
HBV:	Hepatitis B virus
HCV:	Hepatitis C virus
HDV:	Hepatitis D virus
HEV:	Hepatitis E virus
HGV:	Hepatitis G virus
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HCC:	Hepatocellular carcinoma
HCWs:	Health care workers
IDUs:	Intravenous drug users
IEC:	Information Education Communication
NGO:	Non Governmental organization
PT-NANBH:	Post transfusional Non-A, Non-B hepatitis
RIBA:	Recombinant immunoblot assay
SEAR:	South East Asian Region
SPSS:	Statistical program for social science

WHO:	World Health Organization