

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

DR LAXMI PRASAD GHIMIRE

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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

.....

Dr Laxmi Prasad Ghimire

Candidate

Dissertation Defense Committee

.....

Chairman

Dr G U Ahsan PhD, MPH, DTM&H, MBBS
Professor and Advisor MPH program
Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

.....

Member

Dr Shahanaz Chowdhury MPH, MBBS
Assistant Professor and Head,
MPH program, Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

.....

Member

Dr Nadira Mehriban MPH, MBBS
Assistant Professor MPH program
Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

.....

Member

Dr Jesmin Akhter MPH, MBBS
Senior Lecturer MPH program
Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

.....

Dr G U Ahsan PhD, MPH, DTM&H, MBBS
Professor & Advisor MPH program
Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

EVALUATION OF THE DISSERTATION

We, the members of the Dissertation Defense Committee

For

Dr Laxmi Prasad Ghimire

Approved the dissertation entitled

**KNOWLEDGE AND RISK BEHAVIOR ON HEPATITIS C INFECTION
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Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

.....

Dr G U Ahasn PhD, MPH, DTM&H, MBBS
Professor & Advisor MPH program
Department of Public Health
Northern University Bangladesh

Date of approval

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Dr Laxmi Prasad Ghimire
NUB, Bangladesh

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