

## Comparative Study of Level of Awareness on Hepatitis B Infection among First Year Medical and Nursing Students of Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Patna

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### Background

Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection is a global public health problem. More than 2 billion people worldwide have evidence of past or current HBV infection and 350 million are chronic carriers of the virus, which is harboured in the liver and causes an estimated 600,000 deaths from cirrhosis of liver and Hepatocellular carcinoma.

### Aims & Objectives

To determine the level of knowledge and awareness with respect to Hepatitis B infection among first year medical and nursing students at IGIMS, Patna.

### Material & Methods

A pre designed, pretested, anonymous, self administered, semi structured questionnaire containing a set of 26 questions was circulated to obtain responses from the available 84 & 33 first year MBBS and nursing students respectively of IGIMS, Patna during June 2013. Data entry and analysis were done using MS excel.

### Results

The majority (84.61%) of medical and nursing students were aware that Hepatitis B is the major cause of Hepatitis. The study shows that about 80.95% medical students were aware that HBV may be transmitted through semen in

comparison to only 54.5% nursing students. The awareness regarding high risk categories like truck drivers and male homosexuals was seen more amongst the medical students (67.9%) who considerably outnumbered the nursing students (39.4%) in this respect. However, transmission of infection through vaginal secretions was reported by 67.85% of medical and 75.8% nursing students. Also, a larger number of nursing students (78.8%) reported that HBV transmission may occur through breast feeding in comparison to 64.3% of medical students. Despite the fact that 89.3% of medical and 96.9% of nursing students were already immunized against Hepatitis B Virus, only 75.8% nursing students were willing to attend to patients suffering from HBV infection in contrast to 81% medical students.

### Conclusions

In the first year of their respective academic curriculums, both the medical and nursing students showed variable levels of awareness pertaining to the various aspects of Hepatitis B infection. While on one hand they exhibited good knowledge regarding the mode of transmission and high risk behaviour, misconceptions seemed to exist with respect to prophylaxis, vaccination and treatment of HBV. It is thus, very important to focus on the need to improve the knowledge and attitude of the future doctors and nurses towards Hepatitis B for better professional approaches in the times to come.

**Keywords:** Hepatitis B; Awareness, Transmission, High risk category.