

A STUDY ON SWINE FLU AWARENESS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to elicit the level of awareness of primary school teachers on swine flu disease. 300 primary teachers (include both genders) from 15 schools in Puducherry formed the sample of the present study. Questionnaire consisting of 40 test items was used as the tool. The results indicates that the sample has high level of awareness on swine flu. Significant difference exists in the level of awareness of primary grade teachers on swine flu with respect to different demographic variables.

INTRODUCTION

Swine flu; is a pandemic disease also called as hog flu; pig flu and avian flu caused by Swine influenza virus (SIV) or swine-origin influenza viral (S-OIV) strains include influenza C and the subtypes of influenza A (H1N1, H1N2, H2N1, H3N1, H3N2, and H2N3). The virus sustains by reassortment in course of time from pigs; human and avian. In 2009, WHO raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6 for swine flu. It is estimated that anywhere from 50 to 100 million people were killed worldwide. In August 2010, the World Health Organization declared officially that the swine flu is a pandemic disease for more than 208 countries.

Patients susceptible to this severe disease are those younger than five years and over sixty five years of age, pregnant women, those with systemic illnesses, patients with lung diseases, heart disease, liver disease, kidney disease, blood disorders, diabetes, neurological disorders, cancer and HIV/AIDS; and immune suppressed. Among these, children younger than 4 years have the highest complication and death rates. The symptoms include systemic fever, cough, sore throat, nausea, runny nose and myalgia, gastrointestinal upset, muscle pains, severe headache, vomiting and diarrhea apart from minor symptoms like Breathlessness; chest pain; drowsiness ;fall in blood pressure; sputum mixed with blood; bluish discoloration of nails; Irritability among small children, lack of appetite, weakness and general discomfort.

Transmission of the virus in pigs is quite common, through direct contact between infected and uninfected animals; intensive farming direct transfer probably occurs either by pigs touching noses, or through dried mucus. An airborne transmission is through the aerosols produced by pigs coughing or sneezing. In human the virus typically spreads from coughs and sneezes or by touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the nose or mouth. The 2009 pandemic in India reported 44987 H1N1 positive cases and 2728 died. The swine flu in humans is most contagious during the first five days of the illness, although some people, most commonly children, can remain contagious for up to ten days. The nose and throat swab is used to diagnosis to confirm swine flu.

Preventive measures against swine flu virus among humans include using standard infection controls like frequent washing of hands with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after being out in public. Chance of transmission is also reduced by disinfecting household surfaces, with diluted chlorine bleach solution. Avoiding touching one's eyes, nose or mouth with one's hands; Social distancing, (staying away from other people who might be infected) and avoiding large gatherings. Antibiotics like oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza) is used for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses. Secondary infections can be reduced by

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taking plenty of bed rest, drinking lots of fluids, taking pain relievers to reduce fever and ease body aches and supportive care at home and in hospital.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The alarming spread of the swine flu disease with increasing number of death posing an unprecedented challenge to all those involved with medical, social, psychological, economical, ethical and legal aspects of this problem. It is high time that responsible people like researchers, teachers, and parents equip themselves with complete information on various aspects of swine flu in order to help and guide our young generation. There is much need for an integrated approach to the problem which can only be materialized through social action, community organization and empirical research.

Fatalities due to swine flu are more likely in young children. In a social setting like schools young children are taken care and molded mostly by their primary teachers. Hence primary school teachers are the right persons to emphasize the need of awareness of swine flu and to spread the knowledge about swine flu awareness to large mass of people. This information carried over by the children to home thereby it reaches the society within a short span of time with viable frequency. Therefore the first step is to find the level of awareness of primary grade teachers about swine flu thereby take the responsibility to protect our generation and the next from this pandemic disease, so the researchers have decided to measure the swine flu awareness among primary school teachers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to find out the level of awareness of Primary school teachers with respect to swine flu disease.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. The level of awareness of Primary school teachers with respect to swine flu disease is high
2. There is no significant difference in the level of

awareness of Primary school teachers towards swine flu disease with respect to

- Gender (Male / Female)
- Type of school (Government / Private)
- Locality (Urban / rural)
- Subject handled (Arts / Science)
- Type of family (Joint / Nuclear)
- Newspapers reading habit (Regular / occasional)

METHODOLOGY

Normative survey method is used for the present study

SAMPLE

300 primary school teachers (include both the genders) procured from 15 different schools situated in Puducherry region were used as the sample for the present study.

TOOL USED

The questionnaire consists of 40 multiple choice items. It elicits the awareness of swine flu; its symptoms; transmission; treatment and prevention. The developed questionnaire was given to the experts in the field of education and medicine for standardization. Thus the final content validity was established for the questionnaire. Each question carries one mark for correct response and zero for wrong response. The collected data were analyzed statistically by using SPSS.14 version.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The statistically analyzed data shows the following results. Table 1 shows the mean and S.D. value for the level of swine flu awareness of total sample

Sample	N	MEAN	Standard Deviation
Total sample	300	32.90	3.65

The calculated mean value 32.90 is around 80% hence it is inferred that the level of awareness among primary school teachers on swine flu is high.

Table 2 shows the level of awareness among

primary school teachers on swine flu with respect to different demographic variables

Variable	Sub-sample	N	Mean	S.D	t- value	Level of significance
Gender	Male	150	31.5	5.08	0.35	NS
	Female	150	31.6	4.87		
Type of school	Government	150	31.2	5.02	2.12	0.05
	Private	150	32.7	4.82		
Locality	Rural	150	30.8	5.84	2.37	0.05
	Urban	150	32.2	3.81		
Subject handled	Science	162	32.8	4.18	2.77	0.01
	Arts	138	31.1	3.23		
Type of family	Joint	87	31.4	5.4	0.27	NS
	Nuclear	213	31.5	4.7		
Newspapers reading habit	Regular	174	30.6	5.4	2.33	0.05
	occasional	126	28.9	5.3		

The gender and the type of family of primary school teachers do not have significant impact in their level of awareness on swine flu.

Primary grade teachers' working in private schools; teachers coming from urban area and the teachers having regular habit of reading newspapers show high level of awareness (significant at 0.05 level) on swine flu than the teachers working in government primary schools; those coming from rural area and occasional newspaper readers. Similarly teachers handling science subjects show significantly high (significant at 0.01 level) level of awareness on swine flu than the teachers teaching arts subjects.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study highlights that Primary teachers working in private schools are exposed to various types of training programs in their routine duty, therefore they have high level of awareness than that of teachers working in Government schools. Urban teachers have more awareness might be that they can access the needed information about the disease from many sources that are readily available in urban areas at their nearest place. Health conscious news in the newspapers helps the regular newspaper readers to acquire needed knowledge and awareness about swine flu, hence they have

more level of awareness than that of the occasional readers. Normally Science teachers especially biology teachers have higher scientific attitude to reason out the new happenings and hot news related to biology, this might enhance their level of awareness than arts background teachers.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The health education area must be strengthened properly / adequately by giving proper orientation to non-science teachers and teachers coming from rural areas. Firm exposure about the disease can be given in the form of Experts talk, group discussion and consultants. Trainees can be invited to school to give health education in terms of hands on experience and mock exercises. These prognostic measures help to avoid / remove fears, myths and misconceptions and also to develop good positive ethics towards the infected. Suitable awareness learning materials in the form of booklets; pamphlets and guide should be provided with easy understandable text along with figures for free of cost to all the persons related to educational environment.

CONCLUSION

The eradication of the pandemic disease like swine flu is the paramount mandatory of the State and Central government. A joint integral action at war foot venture from Government sector; Public and NGO's are necessary to develop a healthy society.

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