Knowledge of Tuberculosis Disease Among Newly Diagnosed Patients: A cross Sectional study

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Background: Tuberculosis (TB) remains a global threat and a public health problem notwithstanding attempts to eradicate it. HIV, poor nutritional factors and smoking are some of the factors that have led to the enhancement of disease. Other than that poverty and paucity of knowledge on TB disease have contributed to the exposure of this disease. Information on the adequacy of knowledge on TB disease among those who contract the disease is not clearly known. Inadequate knowledge on the transmission of TB disease may lead to poor health seeking conduct and causing persistence of disease in the community. We sought to know the level of knowledge on tuberculosis disease among newly diagnosed patients. This information may be important in designing better preventive measures of tuberculosis disease in the community.

Methods: This was a cross sectional study carried out among 56 active tuberculosis patients attending Outpatient Tuberculosis Clinic at Kiruddu Referral Hospital. Patients between the ages 15-65 years who tested positive on gene-Xpert were enrolled consecutively for a study on vitamin binding protein gene polymorphism and vitamin D bioavailability and cathelicidin expression, between July 2019 to August 2020. A questionnaire was administered to the patients to obtain social demographic data and among these was the knowledge on tuberculosis disease.

Results: The study had more female 31 (55.4%) participants than males, with a median age of 29.5 years. Thirty participants (53%) had adequate knowledge on the existence of tuberculosis disease however; a very low percentage had knowledge of the cause and transmission, 10.7% and 13.2% respectively. Only 28.6% of the participants had knowledge of disease exposure. Surprisingly 23 (41.8%) had secondary education and 9 (16%) had tertiary education. Majority of the participants, 40 (74.1%) responded to having access to health care.

Conclusion: Although we found moderate knowledge on the existence of TB disease among newly diagnosed TB patients, there is still inadequate knowledge on the cause and transmission of the disease, leading to poor exposure preventive methods.