

Awareness and Access to Rapid Diagnostic Tests of HIV, Malaria and Tuberculosis among Rural Pregnant Women of Savannakhet Province, Lao PDR

Authors : Vanphanom Sychareun, Viengnakhone Vongxay, Kongmany Chaleunvong, Pascale Hancart Petitet

Abstract : Background: Lao PDR still has challenges in preventing and managing health against risk of emerging and re-emerging diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria among pregnant women. Community-based intervention for mothers requires more evidences on awareness of such diseases and access to rapid diagnostic tests. The study aims to determine the awareness of pregnant women regarding HIV, TB and Malaria, the access to rapid diagnostic test of such diseases among pregnant women of local community and their factors related. Method: This is a cross sectional study using quantitative approach to explore the awareness of pregnant women on HIV/AIDS/TB and Malaria in Savannakhet province, Lao PDR in three remote districts (Phin, Thapangthong and Atsaphone) of Savannakhet province. The study targeted group was pregnant women at the community level. Sample size for primary data collection of pregnant women was 189. Face-to-face administered questionnaires were applied. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to determine the associated factors with awareness of pregnant women on HIV/AIDS/TB and Malaria. This study is under the HEALTH project/ Expertise France. Result: Most of our participants were pregnant at 28 - 42 weeks (50.3%); ranged 4 - 38 weeks. Mean age of pregnant women was 24.3 years old (range: 14 - 48 years old); 15.9% of whom were at age below 19 years. Around 94.2% of respondents works were farming, 54.5% were illiterate, 74.0% were Mon-Khmer ethnic, and 60% had income lower than average. Only 56.6% that have access to ANC, 39.1% started the access to ANC during the first trimester and only 19.6% had visited the ANC for at least four times. Almost pregnant women (and 92.1% and 93.1%) had low to moderate knowledge of HIV and TB respectively, while three-fourth of pregnant women (74.6%) had low to moderate knowledge of malaria. Slightly higher than half of participants (53.4% and 52.9%) had easy access to HIV and TB respectively ; while 72.5% had easy access to malaria. Majority of participants knew where to get tested for malaria (73.5%) and TB (54.5%), but 73.5% did not know where to get tested for HIV. Very few pregnant women (1.6%, 2.1% and 8.5%) experienced having tested for HIV/TB/malaria. respectively. Factors associated with awareness on HIV were occupation as staff, business (OR:5.9; 95% CI:1.2-28.1), upper secondary education (OR: 14.6; 95% CI:3.1-69.2); Mone-Khmer ethnic (OR: 0.4, 95% CI: 0.2-0.8); and attending ANC more than 4 times (OR:4.1, 95%:1.7-9.7). Factors associated with awareness on TB were occupation as staff, business (OR:2.4; 95% CI: 0.7-8.0), upper secondary education (OR: 6.2; 95% CI: 1.9-20.5); Mone-Khmer ethnic (OR: 0.5, 95% CI:0.3-0.9); attending ANC more than 4 times (OR:2.8, 95%:1.2-6.4). Factors associated with awareness on malaria were upper secondary education (OR: 18.1; 95% CI: 2.3-142.9); Mone-Khmer ethnic (OR: 0.2, 95% CI:0.1-0.4); attending ANC more than 4 times (OR:3.6, 95%:1.5-8.8). Conclusion: A very low awareness on HIV, TB and malaria among pregnant women in rural community of Savannakhet triggers the requirement of comprehensive public health intervention on awareness and access to prevention against emerging diseases for all pregnant women. Future intervention should focus on providing more knowledge to pregnant women during ANC and encouraging them to attend ANC more than 4 times.

Keywords : pregnant women, HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, awareness, Laos

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