

An Anthropological Insight into Cultural Beliefs, Perceptions and Taboos Associated with Reproductive Tract Infections among Women of Village Junga Village, Himachal Pradesh, India

Authors : A. Ratika Thakur, B. A. K. Sinha , C. R. K. Pathak

Abstract : Reproductive Tract Infections are recognized as a serious global health problem with direct impact on women. In the developing countries, prevalence of RTI is much higher relative to other health problems. Women of the reproductive age group are socially, mentally and physically more vulnerable to infections. Also, it is a well established fact that RTI has prolonged complications in women rather than men. It causes ectopic pregnancy, pelvic inflammatory diseases, miscarriage and infertility in the long course. Women perspective about infections is less studied. In this view the study was carried out with an aim to determine knowledge, perception and belief of married women towards reproductive tract infection. The study was conducted in Junga village, District Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India. 48 women were interviewed regarding awareness, beliefs and taboos related to reproductive tract infection. Other aspects like fertility history were also taken into account. The data were collected using interviews with the help of interview schedule and interview guide. Data were recorded in the form of narratives and case studies. The analysis was done using quantitative and qualitative analysis. It was found that a majority of women were not aware about the reasons of infection. Moreover cultural beliefs, perceptions and taboos made them more vulnerable and exposed to RTI. Economic dependency upon men, lack of control in barrier methods were some of the factors that contributed to delayed treatment of women. It was found that a majority of women suffering from RTIs were silently bearing the burden and underwent treatment when the case would not rest in their hands.

Keywords : belief, infection, perception, taboo, women

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