

An Experience of HIV Testing and Counseling Services at a Tertiary Care Center of Bangladesh

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Abstract : Objective: HIV testing and counseling center (HTC) is an important component of the HIV/AIDS detection, prevention and control interventions. The service was first initiated at the Department of Virology, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) since the first case detection in 1989. The present study aimed to describe the demographic profile among the attendees tested HIV positive. Methods: The present study was carried out among 219 HIV positive cases detected through screening at the Department of Virology of BSMMU during the year of 2012-2016. Data were collected through pre-structured written questionnaire during the counseling session. Data were expressed as frequency and percentages and analyzed using SPSS v20.0 program. Results: Out of 219 HIV cases detected, 77.6% were males, and 22.4% were females with a mean age (mean \pm SD) of 35.46 \pm 9.46 years. Among them, 70.7% belonged to the 26-45 age groups representing the sexually active age. The majority of the cases were married (86.3%) and 49.8% had primary level of education whereas, 8.7% were illiterate. Nearly 42% of cases were referred from Chittagong division (south-east part of the country) followed by Dhaka division (35.6%). The bulk of study population admitted to involvement in high-risk behaviour (90%) in the past and 42% of them had worked overseas. The Pearson Chi-square (χ^2) analysis revealed significant relationship of gender with marital ($\chi^2=7.88$ at 2% level) and occupation status ($\chi^2=120.48$ at 6% level); however, no association was observed with risk behaviour and educational status. Recommendations: HIV risk behavior was found to be a prime source for HIV infection among the study population. So, there is need for health education and awareness program to bring about behavioral changes to halt the yearly increase of new cases in the country with special attention to our overseas workers on HIV/AIDS risk and safety.

Keywords : Bangladesh, health education, HIV testing and counseling (HTC), HIV/AIDS, risk behavior

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