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Hepatitis B Vaccination to Infants

Introduction

Hepatitis B is considered to be very common in the United States. A study that was conducted shows that over one million Americans are considered to be infected by Hepatitis B and over half of them have no idea they are infected (London, 2011). It is an illness that is very infectious. The virus responsible for Hepatitis B is called Hepatitis B virus. It spreads when uninfected person comes in contact with the semen, body fluids and blood of infected person and it founds itself inside his immune system. This mostly happens through sharing of needles during drug use, sex and also through various innocent activities such as sharing of razors and toothbrushes. In Africa and Asia, it is epidemic. What most people do not know is that this disease is responsible for over 350 million deaths worldwide.

Over the years, scientists have developed a vaccine that will help in the minimizing of these effects and reduce the death rates due to this. Over the years, the use of vaccine has proven to be the most effective way to protect oneself and the loved ones against succumbing to Hepatitis B. the Hepatitis Vaccine is recommended to all groups of people, be they children or adults. The required dosage is usually 3 shots of the vaccines over a period of 6 months.

- Significance to Knowledge

There is a Research network for Hepatitis B that brings together centers and medical practitioners for the purpose of caring and nursing individuals who have been affected by the disease. Therefore, the purpose of his study is to show the need why this illness must be eliminated at all costs. It is estimated

that over 2 billion people are affected by HBV. In addition, 25% of all the affected die due to complications related to the liver. It is significant to get to know what causes this disease and why its elimination has eluded both researchers and medical practitioners for so long. This study aims at finding ways to reduce the complications arising from the disease. For instance, researchers have not been able to reduce cirrhosis and cancer which arise as a result of Hepatitis B infection (Lebelo, 2008).

This study is also important because it is reported that between 0.3% and 0.5% of all U.S. residents are infected by HBV. Therefore, this research aims at giving better understanding of both physical and psychological effects that this disease causes to patients.

- Research Question

What are the physical and psychological effects of Hepatitis B to patients?

Literature Review

- Previous Research

Various studies have been conducted by the researchers in order to show the effects of Hepatitis B to patients. Many studies have been done separately to better understand the psychological and physical effects of this illness. The Immunization Action Coalition of the United States (IAC) urges all hospitals and health professionals to immunize both infants and adults under their care from hepatitis B through the use of vaccination. In addition, they are urged to carefully record every effect that a patient goes through as the disease manifests itself, as well as when it is eliminated from the body.

According United States to (2011), it is approximated that over 19,000

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women in the United States of America, who are infected with Hepatitis B give birth each year. With this in mind, the need to know how these women are affected both psychologically and physically is important. It has also been established that over 90% of the perinatal infections which are acquired during pregnancy can be prevented through post-exposure prophylaxis when given within 12 hours after birth. Research also shows that this is not always the case; many children who are born with these perinatal infections do not receive post-exposure prophylaxis immediately after birth as it is required.

Previously, it was found out that thimerosal which was found in the hepatitis B vaccine reacted with most of the patients causing various reactions and even death. It was discovered and now all the vaccines are thimerosal free. Presence of thimerosal was what was preventing the hepatitis B vaccine from being enacted as an international birth dose policy. Considering it was removed, there is nothing preventing it from being made compulsory in all hospitals all round the world. Studies have been conducted on the modern vaccine and it has been found out that is medically fit for most of the patients expect for the few who may have reactions with the drug.

The policy is of utmost importance as it will help minimize the deadly effects of Hepatitis B if enacted all-round the world. Studies conducted have come up with possible ways through which most effects of Hepatitis B and are summarized below.

A pregnant woman may be tested for Hepatitis B Surface Antigen and found to be positive. Immediately after birth, the child is tested and found to be negative, then the child is not vaccinated against this disease as he or she

has not contracted (Lee, Gong, Brok, Boxall & Gluud, 2010). Another case is where a chronically pregnant woman infected with the antigen is infected but the wrong tests are conducted on her, HBsAb instead of HBsAg (Lebelo, 2008). This is found to be a common mistake in hospitals as the difference is only one letter in the two tests. This makes the doctor in-charge to believe the patient is fine hence not immunizing the infant. Another case would be when the pregnant woman tests positive but due to poor record keeping, the wrong records are entered making the infant not to be immunized. The mother of the infant may test negative, hence no vaccine given; but the infant gets exposed to the disease by the environment of which he or she is exposed.

These researches give only a mild approach to the effects that occur when infected women give birth, infants who are affected get hospitalized and other family members are affected. This research is not meant to discredit other researches which have been done. Rather, it is meant to complement them and add more information. Many previous researches, as noted, concentrate on specific issues. For instance, Lee, Gong, Brok, Boxall, Gluud (2010), concentrate on the effect of immunization on hepatitis B infected mothers and the effect of vaccination on both mother and child. However, their research does not show how the individual effects on the psychological and physical well-being of the affected

Methodology

- Approach

Questionnaires will be used for data collection in available health institutions.

This will involve sending of the questionnaires to the specific hospitals identified in the study. As the respond rate is most likely to be at 73% as measured from the previous studies, many questionnaires will be sent to the recipients. The Recipients will be hospital nurses that care for Hepatitis B individuals. They will also be administered to the patients who are able to respond and family members of the patients. The questionnaires will involve sections that ask if the client agrees or not and the reasons for their answers.

- Data needs

The data collected by means of questionnaire will be used to determine whether or not the research is a feasible one or not. This data will be analyzed to determine the percentage of people that support the hypothesis.

- Analytical Techniques

For analysis, there will be use of summary statistics to describe the profiles of the nurses, patients and family members who responded to the questionnaires. This summary statistics will involve percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics will be used in this study to establish the psychological and physical effects of Hepatitis B.

References

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