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Research Article

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE ABOUT  
HEPATITIS B & C AMONG BARBERS OF LAHORE PAKISTAN**<sup>1</sup>Dr. Adnan Sharif, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Muhammad Saad Iqbal, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Muhammad Tahir Yaqoob<sup>1</sup>Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College, Mirpur AJK<sup>2</sup>Lahore Medical and Dental College, Lahore Pakistan<sup>3</sup>Govt Mian Nawaz Sharif Teaching Hospital, Yakki Gate, Lahore**Abstract:***Objectives:* To assess the knowledge and practices of barbers regarding transmission risk of HBV & HCV.*Inclusion Criteria:* Barbers of Lahore city *Exclusion Criteria:* Barbers which practice without proper saloons, Barbers outside of Lahore city*Methodology:* Cross sectional study,*Sampling Techniques:* Convenient Sampling*Sample Size:* 95 barbers*Time Scale:* 4Months*Data Collection:* Data will be collected from barbers of Lahore city and questionnaire will be used to find the knowledge, attitude and practice about hepatitis B and hepatitis C.*Data Analysis:* Data will be analyzed by using SPSS 22. Results will be described in percentages. Data will be described by charts and tables.**Corresponding author:****Dr. Adnan Sharif,**Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College,  
Mirpur AJK

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Globally Hepatitis B Virus infects 2 billion people among them 350 million suffered from chronic, lifelong infection. In chronic HBV carriers 15–40% were susceptible to develop liver cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma. HBV and HCV transmitted through infected needles blood transfusion, dental procedure and razor sharing and shaving in barber shops have been identified as key risk factors for the spread of HBV. Knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of Barbers would play a vital part in prevention and control of HBV and HCV [1].

People getting services from these barbers suffer from shave cuts and they spread blood contact diseases like hepatitis B, hepatitis C, HIV [2].

There is strong evidence that razors, barber's scissors, nail files and body piercing instruments are risk factors for transmission of hepatitis B and C [3].

Pakistan need to establish their knowledge and attitudes to the risk of HBV and HCV transmission and their working patterns. Hepatitis B and C virus [HBV/HCV] infections are serious global health problems. Shaving by barbers has been identified as the key risk factor for spread of HBV [4].

The attitudes and practices of barbers regarding the use of new blades and the disposal of sharps were very good. However, they had very little knowledge of the routes of spread of hepatitis B and C [5].

Hepatitis B and C virus (HBV/HCV) infections are serious global health problems. Shaving by barbers has been identified as the key risk factor for spread of HBV. Strategies are needed for raising awareness and regulations of barbers' practices [6].

Majority of barbers (88.6% ) had poor knowledge regarding HCV and HBV. Over all prevalence of HBV and/or HCV among the participated sample was (8.6%) [7].

Barbering is a very ancient profession, which is associated with the use of combs, towels, knives and blades etc. If these are not appropriately disinfected leads to transmission of a range of infections which includes fungal infection, scabies, staphylococcal infection, Hepatitis B and C, HIV and etc [8,9].

There is a need to develop more awareness by the health authorities among the barbers through awareness programs and conducting workshops and motivating them to practice that awareness. 3 out of 5 barbers didn't concern about the health of client.

There is an immediate need for the health authorities to issue licenses to the barbers after giving them safety training as is done in other developed countries [10,11].

Barbers are important professionals of the community which are still owned, cared and financed by the community especially the rural one. Barbers besides performing duties in social events like marriage, circumcision etc. is also responsible for hair and nail cutting. In urban settings they have developed their profession by incorporating facial massage and make-up. It is the need of their profession to utilize instruments like knife, blades etc. The objective of the study was to assess awareness among barbers regarding hepatitis B&C [12].

The level of knowledge among barbers about health hazards associated with their profession is very poor. Majority of them do not have any perception of unhealthy working practices in barbering. Awareness about threat of receiving hazardous infection from their customers is also unsatisfactory [13].

Level of awareness among barbers about hepatitis and risks of transmission is very low, and their Practice of razor reuse that may spread hepatitis is very common. Messages about hepatitis need to be incorporated in media campaigns, in addition to regulation of practices [14].

Blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) have some common epidemiological characteristics, and have infected millions of people throughout the world. Patients infected by acute hepatitis or HIV infections may not be aware of the disease, and thereby cause transmission to others. During haircut, shave, or pedicure, barbers may accidentally expose to their clients' blood, transmit their own infection to them, or transmit the infection from one client to another. Thus the beauty salon staff has a potential role in expansion of infections [15].

Several health hazards including communicable diseases and skin conditions are associated with Barbers' profession to which their visitors are exposed [16].

Thus, knowledge and practice of Barbers would play a vital part in prevention and control of these health hazards. So, the aim of this study is to assess knowledge and practice, and associated factors among barbers about biological hazards associated with their profession [17].

The hairdressing trade may potentially expose its practitioners and their customers to blood-borne infections [18].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

### RESULTS

95 barber shops were selected in the area of Lahore city. All 95 barbers were given questionnaire, were male and their mean age was  $35 \pm 15$  years. 52% barbers were literate and 48% were illiterate.

**Table 1.1.Socio-demographic characteristics of barbers who participated in the study**

Characteristics	N	%
<b>Age</b>		
10 – 20	18	19
21 – 30	41	43
31 – 40	22	23
>40	14	15
<b>Educational status</b>		
Illiterate	48	51
Primary	38	40
Matriculation	8	8
Intermediate	1	1
<b>Period of Occupation</b>		
1 – 5	17	18
6 – 10	28	29
11 – 15	34	36
16 – 20	8	9
>20	8	9

**Table 2. Knowledge and practice of barbers of Lahore about hepatitis B and Hepatitis C**

ITEM	N	%
Know about hepatitis B and C	62	65
Know any of its route of transmission	52	55
Know that reuse of blade as route of transmission	47	49
Know about Hepatitis B prevention by vaccination	18	19
Use new blade for every costumer	91	96

Out of 95 barbers, 62 (65%) knew that Hepatitis B and C are the disease of the liver, causing jaundice and 52 (55%) knew about its transmission through the parenteral route. Those who had knowledge about the parenteral route also knew that reuse of razors can transmit HBV and HCV.

18 (19%) of barbers were aware that HBV can be prevented by vaccination. A large proportion of barbers 91(96%) claimed that they used new blades for every customer.

About 31(33%) of barbers use Dettol for cleaning their instruments while 56(59%) use water and 8(8%) do not clean their instruments.

### DISCUSSION:

The present study was conducted to assess the knowledge of barbers about hepatitis B and hepatitis C(knowledge, awareness and practice). Their knowledge about hepatitis, its route of transmission, risk factors, prevention by vaccination and reuse of blade and razors was low. About 96 % of these

barbers use new blade or razors for new customers but most of them did not know that reuse of blade can cause hepatitis B and C i.e. as route of transmission. Most of these barbers were using water for cleaning their instruments and only 33 % of them were using Dettol and about 8% do not clean their instruments. Such practices of barbers are enhancing the risk of

transmission of many pathogens like Hepatitis B & C virus.

A similar study was carried out in Pakistani population: barber's role in viral transmission.( hepatitis b and C )Asian Biomedicine (Research Reviews and News); Vol. 4 No. 3 Jun 2010; 435-442. Out of 508 barber shops, 99.8% and 98.2% were washing their razor with water and water plus antiseptic solution, respectively, while 99.8% were using new blades. Only 39.6% knew that hepatitis B virus (HBV) and hepatitis C virus (HCV) were viral diseases, 26.6% knew that it can lead to cancer, 90.7% thought that hepatitis could be transferred by blade sharing, 47.8% knew that a vaccine for HBV was available, and 43.0% had education beyond the primary level. None of the barbers used a new or washed apron/towel on every customer.

The above study was conducted among barbers of Lahore Punjab. About 51% of these barbers were illiterate. The sample size was very small and it was a sample of convenience which may result in selection bias. We have not covered some important factors such as circumcision, incision and drainage practices of barbers and appropriate interventions. These factors are very important for planning a successful campaign to prevent the transmission of the above disease. A large-scale well-planned study is needed to assess the effects of the many variables that affect HBV transmission.

Level of awareness among barbers about hepatitis and associated risks of transmission is very low and their practice of inappropriate cleaning of their instruments (by using water) and razor reuse on multiple clients can promote the spread of hepatitis in Lahore.

Policy makers need to give immediate attention to this mode of transmission of blood borne pathogens like hepatitis B virus. Messages about, hepatitis spread by razor transmission and inappropriate cleaning methods of instruments need to be incorporated in media campaigns and interventions for health education and regulation of barbers' practices need to be planned.

An in-depth analysis of behaviors and determinants of practices can have a more profound effect on designing specific interventions for barbers.

#### SUMMARY

- 95 barber shops were selected in the area of Lahore city. All 95 barbers were given questionnaire, were male.

- Barbers between age group 21-30 years were 41 out of 95, making about 43% of the total sample. This is the biggest group among these barbers. Barbers between age group 10-20 years were 18 out of 95, making about 19% of the total sample. . Barbers between age group 31-40 years were 22 out of 95, making about 23% of the total sample. . Barbers age group above 40 years were 14 out of 95, making about 15% of the total sample.table1.1

- Educational status of the sample(95)

**Illiterate 51%**

**Primary 40%**

**Matriculation 8%**

**Intermediate 1%**

- Out of 95 barbers, 62 (65%) knew that Hepatitis B and C are the disease of the liver, causing jaundice and 52 (55%) knew about its transmission through the parenteral route. Those who had knowledge about the parenteral route also knew that reuse of razors can transmit HBV and HCV. 18 (19%) of barbers were aware that HBV can be prevented by vaccination. A large proportion of barbers 91(96%) claimed that they used new blades for every customer.
- About 31(33%) of barbers use Dettol for cleaning their instruments while 56(59%) use water and 8(9%) do not clean their instruments.

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