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Awareness of Primary Care Providers on Genital Schistosomiasis Infection in Northern Nigeria

Connaissance des Prestataires de Soins Primaires sur l'Infection par la Schistosomiase Génitale dans le Nord du Nigéria

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Genital schistosomiasis (GS) is a debilitating neglected tropical disease caused by *Schistosoma haematobium*. Despite its significant impact on reproductive health, awareness and knowledge of GS among healthcare providers, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, remain inadequate, leading to underdiagnosis and mistreatment.

METHODS: This study conducted a cross-sectional online survey to assess the awareness and knowledge of GS among 139 primary healthcare providers in Northern Nigeria. A semi-structured self-administered questionnaire was utilized, covering various aspects of GS including its aetiopathogenesis, clinical features, complications, diagnosis, and prevention/treatment. Respondents were scored based on their answers, with an overall score of ≥ 35 considered indicative of good awareness.

RESULTS: Most respondents were aged 31-50 years (41.0%), male (59.7%), married (84.9%), and working in the public sector (97.8%). Mean scores indicated varying levels of awareness across different aspects of GS, with higher awareness regarding aetiopathogenesis (13.99 ± 3.275) and prevention/treatment (11.27 ± 1.592). However, awareness of complications remained comparatively lower. Overall, 43.9% of respondents demonstrated good awareness of GS. Regional disparities in awareness were observed, with the North-western region exhibiting the highest awareness (52.6%) followed by the Northeast (40.6%) and North-central regions (36.0%).

CONCLUSION: The study underscores the urgent need for targeted educational interventions to enhance healthcare providers' knowledge of GS, particularly in regions with lower awareness levels. Improving awareness and knowledge among primary healthcare providers can facilitate early detection, appropriate management, and prevention strategies, thus alleviating the burden of GS on affected communities in Northern Nigeria and beyond. *WAJM 2024; 41 (7): 805 - 809*

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Primary care providers, Genital schistosomiasis, Northern Nigeria

RÉSUMÉ

CONTEXTE: La schistosomiase génitale (SG) est une maladie tropicale négligée et débilitante causée par *Schistosoma haematobium*. Malgré son impact significatif sur la santé reproductive, la connaissance et la sensibilisation à la SG parmi les prestataires de soins de santé, en particulier en Afrique subsaharienne, restent insuffisantes, conduisant à un sous-diagnostic et à des traitements inappropriés.

MÉTHODES: Cette étude a mené une enquête transversale en ligne pour évaluer la connaissance et la sensibilisation à la SG parmi 139 prestataires de soins de santé primaires dans le nord du Nigéria. Un questionnaire semi-structuré auto-administré a été utilisé, couvrant divers aspects de la SG, notamment son étiopathogénie, ses caractéristiques cliniques, ses complications, son diagnostic, ainsi que sa prévention et son traitement. Les répondants ont été notés en fonction de leurs réponses, un score global de ≥ 35 étant considéré comme indicatif d'une bonne connaissance.

RÉSULTATS: La plupart des répondants avaient entre 31 et 50 ans (41,0 %), étaient des hommes (59,7 %), mariés (84,9 %) et travaillaient dans le secteur public (97,8 %). Les scores moyens indiquaient des niveaux variables de sensibilisation aux différents aspects de la SG, avec une meilleure connaissance de l'étiopathogénie ($13,99 \pm 3,275$) et de la prévention/traitement ($11,27 \pm 1,592$). Cependant, la sensibilisation aux complications restait comparativement plus faible. Globalement, 43,9 % des répondants ont montré une bonne connaissance de la SG. Des disparités régionales dans la sensibilisation ont été observées, la région du nord-ouest affichant la plus grande sensibilisation (52,6 %), suivie des régions du nord-est (40,6 %) et du centre-nord (36,0 %).

CONCLUSION: L'étude souligne la nécessité urgente d'interventions éducatives ciblées pour améliorer les connaissances des prestataires de soins de santé sur la SG, en particulier dans les régions où les niveaux de sensibilisation sont plus faibles. Améliorer la sensibilisation et les connaissances des prestataires de soins de santé primaires peut faciliter la détection précoce, la gestion appropriée et les stratégies de prévention, atténuant ainsi le fardeau de la SG sur les communautés touchées dans le nord du Nigéria et au-delà. *WAJM 2024; 41 (7): 805 - 809*

MOTS-CLÉS: Sensibilisation, Prestataires de soins primaires, Schistosomiase génitale, Nord du Nigéria

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ABBREVIATIONS: DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo; FTH: Federal Teaching Hospital, Katsina; GS: Genital schistosomiasis; HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus; PHCP: Primary Healthcare Providers; STI: Sexually Transmitted Infections; SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa