

Original Article

Rapid assessment of first aid awareness amongst the rural community of Doiwala block, Dehradun

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Abstract:

First aid is the immediate help provided to a sick or injured person and is concerned not only with physical injury or illness but also with other initial care. Many experts believe that even a limited understanding of first aid would be a valuable service to individuals. The present study was done with objective to assess the basic knowledge & understanding of first aid among the rural people. FGD was conducted amongst 156 people of 20-40 years age group in both sexes who participated voluntarily. In the present study it was found that only (25.6%) 40 persons were familiar with the term "First aid" and male female ratio was 2:1.

Key words - first aid, knowledge, cultural practices

Introduction:

First aid -This is immediate help, provided to a sick or injured person until professional help arrives. It is concerned not only with physical injury or illness but also with other initial care which includes psychosocial support for people suffering emotional distress caused by experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event¹. Today Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the major first aid provider in the world. The Mission of the International Federation is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity². A basic knowledge and understanding of first aid can be invaluable for individuals to be able to provide emergency care in the event of an accident, possibly saving lives and minimizing injury. Many experts believe that even a limited understanding of first aid would be an invaluable service to individuals who find themselves in emergency situations³. Almost everybody should have little bit knowledge and skill about the basic first aid in emergency of bleeding, sprains and shocks. Anybody can use it at the time of emergency at home, school and in a journey. It is very necessary for the family members to know about the first aid basics⁴.

First aid in the community aims to build the resilience of communities by working with them in an inclusive and flexible approach in first aid, identifying local capacity and vulnerability to common injuries, community health priorities (such as prevention, health promotion and control of common diseases) and disaster preparedness a response capacity. It also helps the recruitment and retention of effective volunteers who are close to that particular⁵.

Aim of the study: To provide knowledge in first aid help to build safe & healthier Community.

Objectives:- To assess the basic knowledge & understanding of first aid .

- To provide practical measures and skill related to first aid.

Methodology: A rapid assessment of first aid knowledge was done in rural field practice area of department of community medicine, HIHT University, Dehra Dun. FGD was conducted in seven villages of our rural field practice areas, amongst 156 people of 20-40 years age group in both sexes who participated voluntarily. Fourteen groups were formed & focus group discussion was done in seven sessions (two groups in each village) once a week in two months from November

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2010 to December 2010. They have been already informed to gather at Centre. Predesigned and pretested an open ended questionnaire was used to assess the knowledge of the participants regarding basic First aid and various responses were obtained; some were very interesting and some were wonderful. Responses were recorded & analysis was done. After assessment they had been sensitized towards first-aid with help of audio-visual aids (posters, video, oral presentation and practical demonstration).

Following this, discussion was facilitated amongst participants by a faculty member and postgraduate student.

Results:

In the present study it was found that only (25.6%) 40 persons were familiar with the term "First aid" and male female ratio was 2:1. Among these only 21 (52.5 %) people said "it saves life" in reference to it, male female ratio was 2:1. Only 7 i.e. (25.9 %) males have heard about the first aid kit box. Females were totally unaware of this [table-1].

Although (84.2%) people had some basic knowledge regarding treatment of minor ailments but the word "First aid" was heard only by (25.6%) peoples only and they presumed "it's good to have knowledge about first aid." Few people (15.8%) were actually having no idea of first aid given in any illness.

Males (38.7%) were more aware than females (15.1%). Amongst those who had heard about first aid, (42.5%) people presumed that it was given only by doctor & helped to cure the problem. Only (25.9 %) males were aware about the first aid kit but none of the female.

When they were asked about the first aid treatment in some common illnesses, majority of them (81.4%) were aware of diarrhea treatment, followed by (66.1%) who

knew the treatment of High grade fever and severe bleeding also. Only (63.5%) of persons had awareness of home remedy for cold and cough. In females maximum had knowledge of primary treatment in diarrhea (93.0%), cold & cough (90.7%), & high grade fever (70.9%), while males (87.1%) were more aware about the basic treatment of severe bleeding, (65.7%) of males were familiar to management of case of drowning and (60 %) honey bees bite .Very few people knew about the first aid given in case of choking & shock (6.4%) & (8.3%) respectively.

Local first aid remedy responses came forward during the study. These first aid remedies are prevalent in our society since ages. Raw eggs along with black pepper for common cold, applying lime & rubbing metallic utensils at the site of honey bee/ scorpion bite & Jhaad-Phoonk for snake bite, seizures & in case of shock are few examples. Applying Colgate on burn skin & hot utensils to burn/ charring the part in case of injury by old metallic things. After F.G.D. the knowledge & skills has been provided to all the participants its outcome was in terms of knowledge & skills were 100% & 92.9% respectively.

India is rich in cultural heritage some important home based, basic first aid practices are going on since ancient period like (practices of giving dal ka pani ,rice water, butter milk during diarrhea, tulsi- zinger tea during ARI). Today in this modern era these practices are going to merge in a scientific way with modern medicine. Government of India also implemented policy to involve these cultural practices in primary health care level by providing services through alternative Indigenous system of medicine commonly known as pathies, like Homeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani & Siddha under NRHM program.

Table1- Sex wise distribution of first aid knowledge

Variables	Male n=70		Female= 86		Total N=156	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Have you ever heard about the First aid	27	38.6	13	15.1	40	25.6
Can we save the life via First aid	14	51.8	07	53.8	21	52.5
Have you ever heard about the First aid kit/box	07	25.9	-		07	17.5

Table 2: Distribution of respondent's knowledge according to Sex

Variables	knowledge present				Total	
	Male (n=70)		Female (n= 86)		N=156	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
High grade fever	42	60	61	70.9	103	66.0
Vomiting	12	17.1	36	41.9	48	30.8
Cold & cough	21	30	78	90.7	99	63.5
Diarrhoea	47	67.1	80	93.0	127	81.4
Burn	33	47.1	24	27.9	57	36.5
Minor injury & wound	25	35.7	23	26.7	48	30.8
Electric execution	15	21.4	18	20.9	33	21.5
Snake bite	38	54.3	40	46.5	78	50
Scorpion bite	14	20	24	27.9	38	24.4
Honey bee/ burr's bite	42	60	39	45.3	81	51.9
Fracture of bone	14	20	2	2.3	16	10.2
Sprain	13	18.6	11	12.8	24	15.4
Seizures	23	32.8	2	2.3	25	16.0
In case of drowning	46	65.7	42	48.8	88	56.4
In case of suspected poisoning	33	47.1	20	23.2	53	33.9
Severe bleeding	61	87.1	42	48.8	103	66.1
In case of shock	11	15.7	2	2.3	13	8.3
Eye injury	26	37.1	15	17.4	41	26.3
Injury from glass / iron piece	28	40	30	34.9	58	37.2
Choking	07	10	03	3.5	10	6.4

Conclusion & Suggestions: There is need of adoption of first aid programmes to meet local needs and the specific needs of particular groups – e.g. children, people in particular work places etc. Empowerment of people is needed with first aid skills so that they help themselves and their community in the event of injury/disease, thus benefiting community in two ways by preventing morbidity as well as mortality. Community based first aid knowledge and skills provided by trained volunteers not only contribute to improve maternal and child health but also other health-related events. Promotion of first aid in order to have at least one person per household should be trained in first aid so that they can be supportive to their family as well as to community also in need. First aid kits are vital in our scheduled daily life as there are a number of situations in which possibilities of accidents to happen. It is always suitable to store first aid kits at home, school, and in office.

There is requirement of promotion of first aid without discrimination and participation in International Federation global events such as the World First Aid

day using good communication channels including media in order to reach the public with key first aid messages⁶. Proper and Maximum utilization can be obtained by different group of society in need. Since there is scarcity of literature in reference to First-Aids so discussion part is lacking behind, although initiative must be required to generate awareness regarding First-Aids in every section of Society.

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