

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VIRAL HEPATITIS AMONG PRIMARY HEALTH CARE WORKERS IN BRAZIL

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Background

Evidences in Brazil and other countries have shown that knowledge about viral hepatitis (VH) among primary-care providers is generally poor. However, these studies didn't include community health agents, a professional who works in primary care in Brazil, and is responsible for visiting families and giving information about diseases prevention and health care.

This study aimed to assess the knowledge about viral hepatitis among community health agents.

Methods

- Quantitative cross-sectional survey assessing VH knowledge among community health agents in two cities located in State of Espírito Santo, Brazil, using structured questionnaire with questions about vaccine, prevention and transmission of VH.
- The study was approved by Research Ethics Committee of Federal University of Espírito Santo and was conducted on April, 2016.

Results

- 253 community health agents from two towns of State of Espírito Santo responded the questionnaire (129 /124).
- In questions about the ways of transmission of VH:
 - 119 professionals (47%) answered correctly about hepatitis A
 - 72 professionals (28.5%) answered correctly about hepatitis B
 - 52 professionals (20.6%) answered correctly about hepatitis C.
- Regarding vaccines: 114 professionals (45.1%) gave the right answer
- Correct answers for prevention of hepatitis A, B and C were respectively 125 (49.4%), 109 (43.1%) and 74 (29.2%).
- Number of years working in the profession (up to 5 years / more than 5 years) caused no significant difference in the percentage of correct answers, but when we considered each town isolated we observed only in one town that professionals working for more than 5 years had a higher percentage of correct answers on questions about hepatitis A (chi-square test).

Conclusion

- The study showed significant gaps in basic knowledge about VH among this population.
- It is necessary to develop educational strategies and campaigns to improve awareness about these diseases.

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