

Pervasiveness of Leucorrhoea and Health Seeking Behavior of Women with Leucorrhoea: A Cross Sectional Survey

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Abstract

The researchers conducted A cross sectional survey study to explore the Pervasiveness of leucorrhoea, and health seeking behavior of women with leucorrhoea living in rural areas at Varanasi district. With the study objectives of to assess the demographic variables, to assess the pervasiveness of leucorrhoea and to assess the health seeking behavior of leucorrhoea. The study was conducted among 400 purposefully selected women of the selected rural areas in Varanasi India. The levels of pervasiveness and health seeking behavior of leucorrhea were collected using a validated tool. After organizing and analyzing the data the study shows that 81% of the study sample had whitish discharge, 74.25% had less than 5ml leucorrhea discharge, 52% had transparent watery discharge, 62% had odorless discharge, 31.75% had leucorrhea for less than a year, 77.75% had pain in menstruation, 75.5% had general weakness, 65.875% had pain & heaviness in lower abdomen, and 63.75% of the population did not seek any medical help in case of leucorrhea or its associated symptoms. 36.25% of the women have health seeking behavior to the problems of leucorrhea and 63.75% of the samples don't seek medical help in case of any leucorrhea or its associated signs and symptoms. The problem of leucorrhea is not been considered a big issue by the women in the community. Yet the problem which is just being seen is just the tip of the iceberg and yet the actual problem is below the tip of the iceberg. The importance of bringing this problem to lime light is the need of the hour and women need motivation and encouragement in understanding their problems and seek medical advice.

Keywords: Leucorrhea, Pervasiveness, Health Seeking Behaviors, Women Health.

Introduction

Leucorrhea is a common condition faced by many women across the world. Though usually it is not a cause for serious concern, it is better to seek treatment to avoid complications. Leucorrhea is a white, greenish or a slightly yellow discharge from the vagina. Almost all women experience vaginal discharge, which is white and odourless, and this is a natural function of the body to maintain a healthy vagina and flush out harmful micro-organisms. But if there is any infection, the discharge changes colour. Leucorrhea in pregnancy is common. It is normal in adolescent girls and may sometimes be evident in new born girls too.

Excessive discharge of a thick, whitish or yellowish, sticky, foul-smelling material from the vagina is called Leucorrhoea. This common problem may occur due to unhygienic conditions, infection of the genital tract, or

impaired immune function. Unfortunately, most women are highly embarrassed by this problem. Well, women's are not only embarrassed in front of others because of this, but most of them also avoid discussing the problem with their medical health care providers, which is why the treatment for vaginal discharge caused by leucorrhoea could be a bit of a challenge.

Every woman has periodically some normal vaginal discharges, which maintaining chemical balance and the flexibility of vaginal muscles, serve as normal defensive system for vagina. If such discharges exceeds normalcy and become white or yellow thick liquid with a foul smell, it is called 'Leucorrhoea' that may be a sign of infection.

Abnormal leukorrhea may be caused by infections

with bacteria, yeast, or other microorganisms. For example, many sexually transmitted diseases, which involve the transmission of viruses or bacteria and include diseases such as gonorrhea and chlamydia, are major causes of leukorrhea. These diseases lead to infection of the cervix, which is indeed one of the most common gynecological disorders. The infection has a tendency to irritate the mucus glands of the cervix, causing them to secrete an excess of mucous mixed with pus. Leukorrhea is also a sign of vaginitis (inflammation of the vagina), which is often caused by infection with the fungus *Candida albicans* or by infection with the protozoan parasite *Trichomonas vaginalis*. Infection with these organisms may give rise to an irritating discharge that is often quite resistant to treatment. A tampon, diaphragm, or other foreign object left too long in the vagina can also cause leukorrhea.

Methodology

The researchers conducted a cross sectional survey study to explore the Pervasiveness of leucorrhoea, and health seeking behavior of women with leucorrhoea living in rural areas at Varanasi district. With the study objectives of to assess the demographic variables, to assess the pervasiveness of leucorrhoea and to assess the health seeking behavior of leucorrhoea. The study was conducted among 400 purposefully selected women of the selected rural areas in Varanasi India. A checklist on pervasiveness of the leucorrhoea, its associated symptoms and the health seeking behavior was formulated. Before using the checklist to the study population, the face validity of the checklist was censured by a committee of experts in research methodology, Obstetrics and Gynecological Nursing, Community health Nursing and Sociology. On calculating the sample size with one sample study method (dichotomous) with confidence level 99%, Margin of error 5%, Population Proportion 40%, and a population size 2000, the sample size was calculated to 372 samples with 10% attrition rate the sample size was finalized to 372±30 samples. Around 400 samples were conveniently selected for the study after obtaining informed consent from the study participants. Before the collection of data, permission was obtained from the principal of Apex College of Nursing and Gram Pradhan (Sarpanch) of selected village of Varanasi District. The researchers then introduced themselves, took required oral and written consent from the study samples and gave instructions regarding the checklist. Each sample was asked for 5-10 mins of their time to finish the checklist. The data was summarized, organized, tabulated & analysed according to the objectives of the study by using descriptive (frequency and percentage) statistics.

Results

Data were collected, organized and analyzed according to the objectives laid down by the researchers. Out of the 400 sample, 15 basic demographic details were collected and as the table 1 depicts 49.25% were women of age group 20 - 30 years, 27.25% were women had only primary education, 90.75% were unemployed, 27% of the samples had a monthly family income 10,000 - 15,000, 86% were married marital status, 62.25% of, the sample

had a multigravida, 41.75% were the no. of children 1 - 2, 59.25% of the samples natural family planning, 79.5% of the samples whenever necessary in duration of uses, 59% were mixed food intake, 92% of the sample personal habits nil, 91.25% of the samples no history of exercise, 91.5% of the samples duration of exercise never practiced, 99.5% of the samples no history of yoga.

Table 1: Demographic Variables.

N=400			
Demographic Variable	Options	Number	Percentage
Age	20-30	197	49.25%
	31-40	126	31.5%
	41-50	58	14.5%
	51-60	19	4.75%
Education	Primary	109	27.25%
	Secondary	103	25.75%
	Graduate	76	19%
	Post Graduate	6	1.5%
	Illiterate	106	26.5%
Occupation	Own Business	122	30.5%
	Unemployed	363	90.75%
	Private Employee	10	2.5%
	Government Employee	5	1.25%
Family Monthly Income	Less Than 10,000	105	26.25%
	10,000 - 15,000	108	27%
	15,000 - 20,000	98	24.5%
	Above 20,000	89	22.25%
Marital Status	Married	344	86%
	Unmarried	48	12%
	Divorced	1	0.25%
	Separated	7	1.75%
Parity	Prim gravida	72	18%
	Multigravida	249	62.25%
	Null gravida	79	19.75%
No. of Children	No Children	89	22.25%
	1 - 2	167	41.75%
	3 - 5	122	30.5%
	More Than 5	22	5.5%
History of Contraception	Copper - T	4	1%
	Oral Contraceptive	2	0.5%
	Barrier Method	31	7.75%
	Natural Family Planning	237	59.25%
	Nil	126	31.5%
Duration of Uses	Whenever Necessary	318	79.5%
	Less Than One Year	11	2.75%
	1 - 3 Year	13	3.25%
	More Than 3 Years	58	14.5%
Types of Food Intake	Vegetarian	158	39.5%
	Non Vegetarian	6	1.5%
	Mixed	236	59%

Table continues...

Personal Habits	Alcohol Intake	0	0%
	Tobacco Chewing	0	0%
	Smoking	5	1.25%
	Betel Nuts	7	1.75%
	Any Others	20	5%
	Nil	368	92%
History of Exercise	Yes	35	8.75%
	No	365	91.25%
Duration of Exercise	Less Than 6 Months	4	1%
	6 – 12 Months	9	2.25%
	1 – 3 Years	21	5.25%
	Never Practiced	366	91.5%
History of Yoga	Yes	2	0.5%
	No	398	99.5%
Duration of Yoga	Less Than 6 Months	2	0.5%
	6 – 12 Months	0	0%
	1 – 3 Years	0	0%
	Never Practiced	398	99.5%

The distribution of the incidence of color of the leucorrhea showed that 81% of the study sample had whitish discharge, 10.5% had Creamish colored discharge, 8.25% had Yellowish discharge, no one had brownish discharge and 0.25% had black discharge.

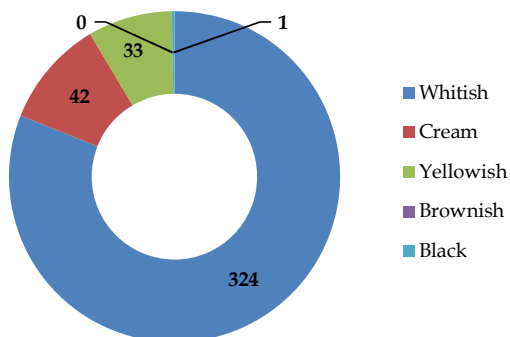


Fig. 1: Color of the Leucorrhoea.

The distribution of the amount of leucorrhea among the study samples is about 74.25% had less than 5ml, 25.5% had using pad to absorb leucorrhea and 0.25% had changing pad more per day.

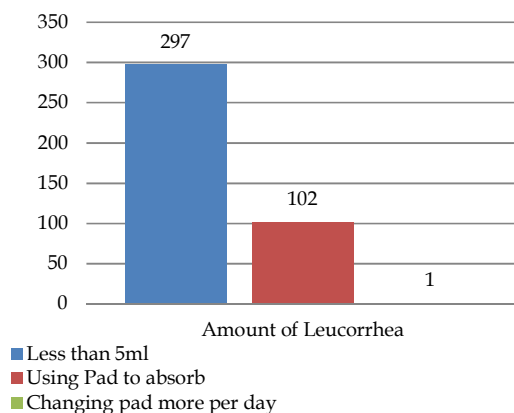


Fig. 2: Amount of Leucorrhoea.

The distribution of the consistency of the leucorrhea among the study participants was 52% had transparent watery discharge, 18.25% had frothy discharge, 29% had foamy discharge and 0.75% had cheesy discharge.

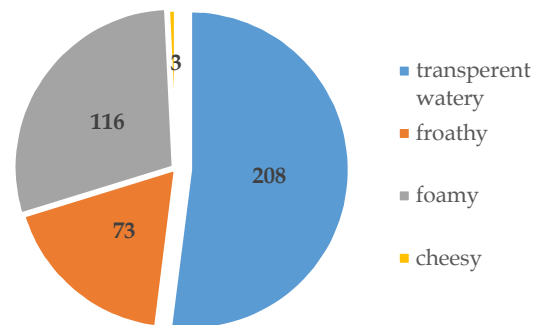


Fig. 3: Consistency of the Leucorrhoea.

The distribution of the odor of the leucorrhea among the study participants was 62% had odorless discharge, 33.75% had foul odor and 4.25% had fishy odor.

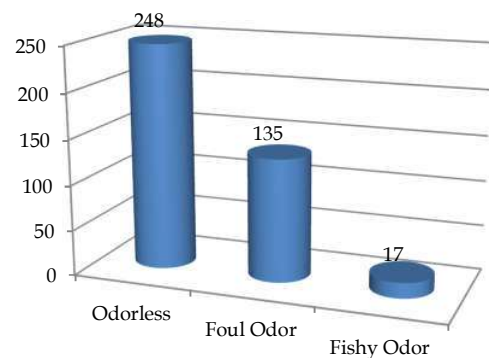


Fig. 4: Odor of the Leucorrhoea.

The distribution of the duration of the leucorrhea among the study participants was 31.75% had leucorrhea for less than a year, 31% had leucorrhea for 1-4 years, 16.75% had leucorrhea for 4-6 years and 20.5% of the study participants had the complaint of leucorrhea for more than 6 years.

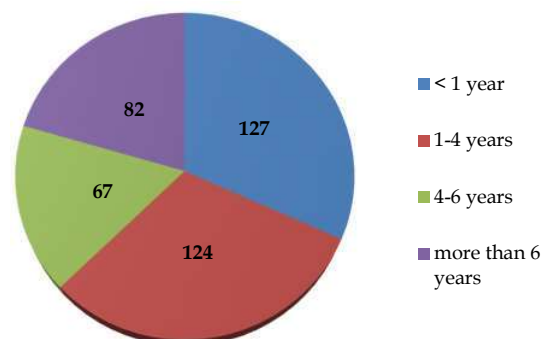


Fig. 5: Duration of the Leucorrhoea.

The distribution of the associated signs and symptoms of the leucorrhea was about 0.75% of the study participants had breathlessness, about 46% had head ache and giddiness, 8% had indigestion, 1% had paleness, 27% had anorexia, 77.75% had pain in menstruation, 75.5% had general weakness, 5.75% had poly urea, 65.875% had pain

& heaviness in lower abdomen, 1% had constipation, 2.25% had anemia, 1.5% local soreness, 64.5% had lumbago, 35.75% Malaise and 6.5% had pruritis.

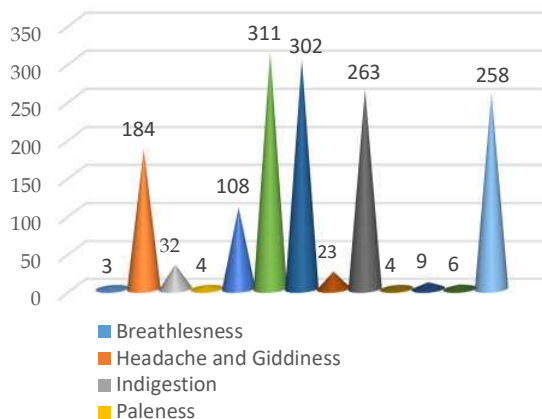


Fig. 6: Associated signs and symptoms of leucorrhea.

On assessing the distribution of the health seeking behavior of the leucorrhea among the 400 samples it shows that 36.25% of the women have health seeking behavior to the problems of leucorrhea and 63.75% of the samples don't seek medical help in case of any leucorrhea or its associated signs and symptoms.

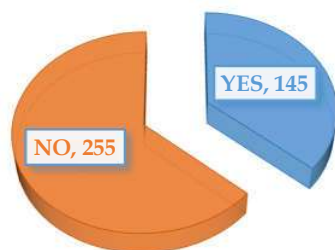


Fig. 7: Health Seeking Behaviour.

Conclusion

The problem of leucorrhea is not been considered a big issue by the women in the community. Yet the problem which is just being seen is just the tip of the iceberg and yet the actual problem is below the tip of the iceberg. The importance of bringing this problem to lime light is the need of the hour and women need motivation and encouragement in understanding their problems and seek medical advice.

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