

# A Descriptive Cross - Sectional Study on Knowledge & Treatment Seeking Behavior Regarding Leucorrhoea among the Reproductive Age Group Women in Rural Area: In View to Develop an Information Booklet on Management of Leucorrhoea

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**Abstract:** *More than 75% women have experience leucorrhoea during their lifetime and 45% of them have recurrent condition. Nowadays, a much greater number of young people suffer from leucorrhoea which hinders their ability to grow and develop to their full potential. Many people are still ignorant and unaware of prevent leucorrhoea which threatens their health not only for recent time but also for the future<sup>1</sup>. In the present descriptive cross - sectional study an attempt was made to assess the knowledge & treatment seeking behavior regarding leucorrhoea among the women of reproductive age group in rural area.*

**Keywords:** Leucorrhoea, knowledge, Treatment seeking behaviour, reproductive women, rural area

## 1. Introduction

Women and children are our Nation's greatest assets. Health of the women is the basis for the better health of the family as well as of the nation. A woman can give healthy baby to the family and to the nation only when she is healthy and has good reproductive health.<sup>2</sup>

Despite, reproductive health being the major focus of the ICPD, it was dropped out of the millennium development goals, therefore it is needed to focus on this major issue<sup>3</sup>. Leucorrhoea is termed as an excessive normal vaginal discharge which may have cervical & vaginal pathology<sup>4</sup>. Leucorrhoea is a condition that does not have a sudden acute onset. It refers to a general toxic condition of the female genital system. It may affect one or more organs of the female reproductive system. In chronic leucorrhoea, the vaginal discharge may be white, yellow or even greenish and accompanied by pus<sup>5</sup>.

The problem of Leucorrhoea has been studied in various Indian settings, focusing not only on the medical/clinical aspect, but also on women's perceptions. The vast folk vocabulary and the perceived severity of the disease make it difficult for a researcher to measure the exact levels of prevalence. Most of the women perceive it to be a normal phenomenon in their life while a few consider it to be a non - curable illness. The health seeking behavior is poor in women regarding her health specially reproductive health, the normality of the disease is often influenced by cultural, social, and other group specific factors<sup>6,7</sup>.

Unfortunately, most women are highly embarrassed by this problem, 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<sup>8</sup>. There is need for creating community awareness about health care facilities and instills self concern in women for their own health needs for their reproductive health promotion.

## Objectives

- 1) To assess the knowledge of leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group in rural area.
- 2) To assess the treatment seeking behavior regarding leucorrhoea among women of reproductive age group in rural area.
- 3) To determine the association between the treatment seeking behavior with knowledge.
- 4) To develop an information booklet on management of leucorrhoea.

## 2. Methodology

Quantitative descriptive approach adopted by the investigator for the accomplishment of the present study & a cross - sectional descriptive study was conducted in the selected rural area of Maharashtra. The sample size was 200 women of reproductive age group subjects selected by using non probability convenient sampling technique. The analysis of the study was done by using both inferential & descriptive statistics in terms of frequency and percentage, and chi - square test used to find association between the variables.

## 3. Result

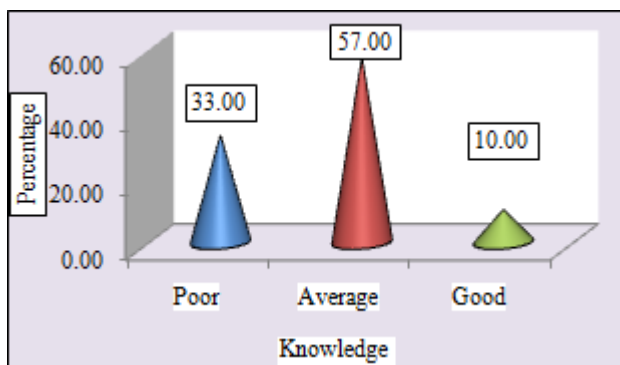
It was divided into 5 sections

**Section 1 - Results of Demographic Variables** - As per as age is concerned, majority of women (23%) were in the age

group 20 - 25, followed by 21% women were in the age group 15 - 20, 20% were in the 25 - 30 years of age, 17% in the 30 - 35 years of age, 11% were in the 40 - 45 and very few (8%) were in the 35 - 40 years of age. As per as education is concerned. Majority (38%) of women in the

study were educated up to secondary, followed by 20.50% up to higher secondary, 16.50% were educated up to primary, 15% were illiterate & very few (10%) were graduates.

**Section 2 - Result of Knowledge Regarding Leucorrhoea**



**Figure:** Analysis & interpretation of knowledge regarding leucorrhoea among the reproductive age group women in rural area in terms of frequency and percentage.

In knowledge scores, majority (57%) of women had average knowledge, 33% women had poor knowledge, and very few women (10%) had good knowledge. The average knowledge score was 11.49 with standard deviation of 5.96.

had taken consultation, immediately once they felt the symptom and 60.29% taken delayed after the occurrence of this symptoms. 68.48% women taken treatment by consulting doctor & 45.65% women tried home remedies for leucorrhoea. Causes of seeking medical examination was fear of illness in 37.58% women, itching & burning in 24.24% women & very few (7.88%) had fear of STDs. But almost women (49.09%) not sought medical examination due to their negligence and 30.30% because of shyness to exposure during examination and few women (6.06%) because of financial problem.

**Section 3 - Result of treatment seeking behavior regarding leucorrhoea**

82.5% Women of reproductive age group had experienced of leucorrhoea. Less than two fifth of women (41.21%) sought medical advice, while 58.79% didn't seek it mainly, because they believed that leucorrhoea is a normal symptom. 38.24%

**Section 4**

**Table 17:** Association of knowledge regarding leucorrhoea with treatment seeking behavior

Variable	Groups	Knowledge			Chi Square	Table value	d. f.	p value	Significance
		Poor	Average	Good					
Discomfort with the discharge	Yes	24	21	2	19.04	5.99	2	0.002	Significant
	No	21	84	13					
Sought medical advice for white discharge	Yes	10	50	8	9.38	5.99	0	0.009	Significant
	No	35	55	7					
Treatment for leucorrhoea	Yes	20	63	9	3.21	5.99	2	0.2	Not Significant
	No	25	42	6					

For the treatment seeking behavior Discomfort with the discharge and sought medical advice for white discharge the p value of the association test with knowledge was less than 0.05. Concludes that, there was significant association of these seeking behavior with knowledge regarding

leucorrhoea among the reproductive age group women in rural area

**Section 5**

**Table 18:** Association of knowledge regarding leucorrhoea with demographic variables

Variable	Groups	Knowledge			Chi Square	Table value	d. f.	p value	Significance
		Poor	Average	Good					
Age	15 - 20	17	23	2	23.46	18.31	10	0.009	Significant
	20 - 25	18	25	3					
	25 - 30	10	21	9					
	30 - 35	11	23	0					
	35 - 40	3	8	5					
	40 - 45	7	14	1					
Religion	Hindu	1	1	1	23.94	12.59	6	0.001	Significant
	Muslim	26	71	15					
	Christian	17	31	3					

	other	22	11	1					
Education	Primary	5	9	6	16.97	15.51	8	0.030	Significant
	Secondary	9	28	4					
	Higher Secondary	12	15	3					
	Graduate	15	18	0					
	Illiterate	25	44	7					
Marital Status	Married	51	89	15	4.57	9.49	4	0.334	Not Significant
	Unmarried	1	0	1					
	Separated	14	25	4					

For the variables like Age, religion, education, occupation and family income the p value of the association test with knowledge was less than 0.05. Concludes that, there was significant association of these demographic variables with knowledge regarding leucorrhoea among the reproductive age group women in rural area.

#### 4. Discussion & Implications of the Study

The present study focuses into the rural woman's knowledge and treatment seeking behavior about the most commonly and frequently encountered problem in their life. It explores the problem of leucorrhoea and is an attempt to bring forth the knowledge, and treatment seeking behavior that women hold towards this normal discomfort. On analyzing women's treatment seeking behavior regarding leucorrhoea in the present study, it was found that majority of women 82.5 percent reported the problem of leucorrhoea, this finding is higher than which was reported in earlier studies in a Slum Dwelling South Asian Community among the total respondents interviewed around 32.7 percent reported having the problem of leucorrhoea.<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the perceived nature of leucorrhoea, the results of present study revealed that some women perceived it as a normal event in their reproductive age, 65% of women had poor knowledge regarding causes of leucorrhoea, others attributed white discharge to external factors like hot weather. The results of present study showed that cheesy white and watery yellowish discharge was reported by a sizeable proportion of women. This finding can be explained by the fact that color of discharge is closely related to its consistency because the presence of excessive abnormal leucorrhoea along with its other characteristics indicates one type or another of RTI and STD.

On the other hand, all women in the present study reported that leucorrhoea discharge was bothering them, because of wetness, bad odor and itching. In congruence with this EL - Shenawy found that nearly all women cited that they are bothered by the discharge in one way or another.<sup>10</sup>

Inquiry about treatment seeking behaviour by women with leucorrhoea revealed less than one - half of them never consulted a physician. In addition, it was found that sizeable proportion of women sought medical advice after a long time of the onset of leucorrhoea. This was mainly due to negligence, lack of money, increased responsibilities as well as their belief that this symptom is normal. These findings are in agreement with Younis, et al. in rural Egypt who claimed that women tend to seek medical help only if an illness is advanced, and reasons beyond women's delay in

seeking medical care for vaginal discharge are personal, social and professional.<sup>11</sup>

Particularly service provider must have awareness and thorough knowledge towards the problem of leucorrhoea, to bring down the prevalence rates for leucorrhoea women should be counseled regarding leucorrhoea, encourage women to seek medical advice and complete course of treatment rather than retrieving to traditional methods of disease control is the need of the hour.<sup>12</sup>

This research helps to improve the existing knowledge in the field of nursing research. The nurse as an important member of health team is responsible for imparting this knowledge. Hence she should be also made aware of the role in nursing education through regular in service educational programs. This study will provide a data related to prevalence of leucorrhoea, its knowledge & treatment seeking behavior among the women of reproductive age group. The findings can be utilized by the health administrator to plan the community awareness programme for health education. The implication of the study can be discussed under four broad categories.

- Nursing service
- Nursing administration
- Nursing education
- Nursing research

#### 5. Conclusion

Thus, the present study brings out a high prevalence of leucorrhoea 82.5% among the rural women. Age, education, Marital status and occupational status, were seen to influence and shape the knowledge and treatment seeking behavior about the problem of leucorrhoea. Distribution of information booklet on leucorrhoea will enhance the knowledge and treatment seeking behavior of the rural women thus will prevent further complications, morbidities among the women.

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