

Knowledge of Osteoporosis among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Osteoporosis is a condition that causes bones to become brittle and prone to fracture. It is a degenerative disease, which can become painful and affects people's lives through the loss of mobility and independence. Up to 90 percent of peak bone mass is acquired by the age 18 in girls and 20 in boys, which makes youth the best time to invest in one's bone health. Since the bone density decreases with age, acquisition of peak bone mass during the first three decades and the following retention of bone through middle-age are essential determinants for reducing the risk of osteoporosis. The fundamental requirement for managing any health disorder begins with the assessment of the existing awareness of the disorder within the target subjects residing in a region. Hence assessing Knowledge and awareness about the risk factors for osteoporosis are important for the prevention and management of the disease as there is evidence suggesting that knowledge and awareness is a contributor to osteoporosis prevention. Hence particular focus and awareness of risk factors, beliefs and practices is desirable during the late adolescent years, as bones are developing more rapidly than in the childhood years, so that preventive strategies can be devised at a young age.

Methodology: A 20 item instrument with true, false and don't know responses was drafted, based on the Osteoporosis knowledge assessment scale (OKAT) questionnaire. The scoring range was 1 to 20. This was administered to a 180 randomly-selected, healthy young adults aged 20 – 24 years.

Results: A total of 120 subjects participated in this study, of which 45 % males & 54% females have participated in this study. Maximum participation of 21% was from age group of 24 and least 20 age group. Understanding of osteoporosis (symptoms and risk of fracture in osteoporosis). Q1, 2, 8, 9, 11 where the participants have given 43% answers correctly, 14 wrong, 42% don't know. Understanding of risk factors for osteoporosis (Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 18), where 23% answered correctly, 21% wrong answers, 55% didn't know. Knowledge of preventive factors such as physical activity, diet (Q10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17) where 18% answered correctly, 23% answered incorrectly, 34% didn't have a clue. Treatment availability, where 18% answered correctly, 22% answered incorrect, 80% have no clue. In total 37% of participants have some idea, 20% have the wrong impression of osteoporosis while less than half of population have no idea about osteoporosis.

Conclusion: It is concluded that there is a lack of the knowledge regarding osteoporosis and its consequences among the participants which plays a major role in prevention. We recommend integration of primary health programs regarding osteoporosis and early detection and management of osteoporosis in orthopedic or rheumatology outpatient clinics.

Keywords: osteoporosis, young adults, awareness

