

SUMMARY

Hepatitis C virus (HCV), the major causative agent of non-A and non-B hepatitis, poses a serious worldwide health problem. An estimated 100 million individuals worldwide are chronically infected with HCV. Egypt has the largest epidemic of hepatitis C virus (HCV) in the world. The recently released Egyptian Demographic Health Survey [EDHS] tested a representative sample of the entire country for HCV antibody. The overall prevalence sero-positive for antibody to HCV was 14.7%.

Because of the chronic and irreversible nature of the disease, it needs self-care programs to be developed according to clients needs and to maintain his/her independence and sense of well-being. Moreover, very little studies included the effect of self-care programs of these clients, as well as self-care researches could contribute to fulfilling the quest for providing a better life for those who have this chronic disease. Self-care is an acquired behaviour, which can satisfy many needs of clients, provide growth and development, and prevent deviation from health.

The aim of this study was to evaluate home health care program for clients with hepatitis C virus and their family members (caregivers). Therefore, this study was undertaken to determine health needs and problems of HCV clients and their family members, to design, carryout and evaluate the effect of self-care management program.

The study was conducted in fourteen months at the Medical Outclient Clinics of Benha University Hospital in Benha City and the clients' houses. A quasi-experimental design was used in carrying out this study. The sample of the study included 100 HCV clients and their family

members (100) taking into consideration the following criteria for the HCV clients: both male and female cases, different age groups and different social status, and should be residents of El-Kalyubia governorate, and their family members must be living within the same clients house or living by near the house.

The tools utilized in this study comprised a structured interview questionnaire for the assessment of knowledge, practice, self-care management; and stress symptoms' level inventory for HCV clients and their family members. An observational checklist for home environment assessment. Stress symptoms levels inventory and the medical history for HCV clients (from medical records) were utilized for the purpose of study.

The main findings of this study were summarized as follows:

- More than half (59.0%) of HCV clients sample were males, More than three quarters of them were married (77%), the majority of them (89.0%) reside rural areas and less than third of them (30.0%) were secondary school.
- Most (94.0%) of HCV clients' sample had water supply inside their homes, a minority (6.0%) of them stored water in covered containers, and slightly more than half (54.0%) of them refused garbage in special box.
- Less than half (45.0%) of HCV clients sample knew that they had kidney disease and more than half (59.0%) received the treatment for HCV.

Self care management:

- Regarding HCV clients nutrition, almost all (99.0%) the study sample after implementation of the home health care program were eating fresh vegetables and fruits, small intake carbohydrates, little taking fatty foods, avoiding eating manufactured food and stoped eating it.
- Regarding HCV clients itching after implementation of the home health care program, almost all of them (99.0%) were avoiding rubbing of the skin, cutting the nails and staying a way from high temperature places (100.0%).
- Regarding HCV clients fatigue, most of the sample after implementation of the home health care program were doing exercise regularly (94.0%), and using body relaxation properly (89.0%).
- Regarding HCV clients psychological changes as depression and worries, most of the sample after implementation of the home health care program were accepting their health situation (95.0%), listening to the Koran (90.0%), and asking others (friends and family) reassurance and compassion (92.0%) .
- As regards muscle cramps all most all of the clients after implementation of the home health care program were using water compresses and taking a rest to overcome muscle cramps (99.0% & 100.0% respectively).

According to research hypothesis:

- the self-care management program in the present study was accomplished, as shown by the significant improvements in HCV clients' and their family members knowledge and practice mean scores from pre to post home health care program.

According to research questions:

- (1) Implementation of the self-care management program improved significantly the HCV clients' and their family members' knowledge and practices.
- (2) The self care management program improved the HCV clients' and their family members' knowledge and practices in relation to their residence, water supply and collection of garbage refuse, that were evident through significant improvement in post-test.
- (3) The self care management program significantly alleviated HCV clients stress symptom levels, accomplished through psychological stress symptoms mean scores.

Based on the results of the present study, research hypothesis and research questions, it is concluded that:

- The implemented home health care program revealed a significant improvement of client's and their family member's regarding knowledge as (causative agents of HCV, modes of transmission and prevalence of HCV in Egypt), practice as (covering the wounds apply an appropriate disinfected before cleaning and clean with soap and water immediately) and self-care management about HCV.
- There was a highly statistically significant relationship between client's and family members total knowledge, practice and self-care management and their educational level.
- Significant improvement was detected for HCV patient's psychological stress symptoms after the home health care program implementation.

- There were positive correlation between client's and family
- knowledge, practice and self care management pre/post program implementation.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Promotion and enhancement of the self-care modalities to HCV clients' and their family members' a strict written illustrated instructions about disease process, allowed foods, rest and physical activities, and follow up should be continued after implementation of the home health care management program.
- More studies in this field are urgently needed with large probability sample from different geographical areas to allow greater representation and generalization of the results.
- Family members should be informed about self protections related to hepatitis C.