Research Article

Factors Affecting Intention to Disclose HIV Status among Adult Population in Sarawak, Malaysia

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Background. Disclosure of HIV-positive status is an essential prerequisite for the prevention and care of person living with HIV/AIDS as well as to tackle hidden epidemic in the society. *Objective.* To determine the intention to disclose the HIV/AIDS status among adult population in Sarawak, Malaysia, and factors affecting thereof. *Methods.* This cross-sectional community-based study was conducted among adult population aged 18 years and above in Sarawak, Malaysia. A gender-stratified multistage cluster sampling technique was adopted to select the participants. A total of 900 respondents were successfully interviewed by face-to-face interview using interview schedule. Stepwise binary logistic regression models were fitted in SPSS version 22.0 to identify the factors associated with the disclosure of HIV/AIDS status. A p value less than 0.05 was considered as statistically significant. *Results.* The mean (SD) age of male and female respondents was 41.57 (13.45) and 38.99 (13.09) years, respectively. A statistically significant difference of intention to disclosure of HIV status was found between males and females ($p < 0.05$). A stepwise binary logistic regression analysis revealed that age, occupation, knowledge on HIV transmission, and content of discussion about HIV/AIDS appeared to be potential predictors for male respondents to disclose HIV status, while ethnicity and content of discussion on HIV/AIDS were found to be important predictors among the female respondents ($p < 0.05$). *Conclusion and Recommendation.* Though the study did not depict the national prevalence of disclosure of HIV/AIDS status, the findings of the study would provide an important basic information for programme intervention, policy, and future research agenda.

1. Introduction

Global HIV statistics reported that there were almost 36.7 million people living with HIV of which 1.8 million people became newly infected by HIV in 2016. However, cumulatively, about 76.1 million people were living with HIV and 35.0 million people died from AIDS-related illness since last epidemic [1]. In Malaysia, the total reported HIV/AIDS cases for three decades (1986–2016) were 111,916 and total reported AIDS-related deaths (1986–2016) were 18,827 [2, 3]. In Sarawak, there were 2,178 HIV infections with 480 AIDS-related deaths. The notification rate in Sarawak was 8.7 per 100,000 persons, which was lower than the national average of 10.9 per 100,000 per person [2, 3].

Disclosure of HIV status was an important variable, as disclosure of HIV status to a sexual partner, close relatives, and friends might benefit people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), partners, and society. Some of the potential benefits were improving emotional and psychological well-being [4, 5], early enrolment on antiretroviral therapy, and better adherence to therapy [6, 7], and disclosure to sexual partner may increase HIV testing [4, 8] and reducing risk of HIV transmission [9, 10] including HIV transmission from the mother to child [8, 11].

However, the pattern of disclosure of HIV status varies among community, such as disclosure to sexual partner (56 to 81%), family members (70 to 87%), and friends (26 to 88%) in the United States [12, 13], and disclosure to sexual partner (70%), family members (78%), and friends (7%) in Asia, such as China [14] and India [15]. Besides, pattern of disclosure also varies between genders [16] and it is influenced by various factors, namely, sociodemographic factors