

**ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MASS MEDIA AND HIV TRANSMISSION
KNOWLEDGE OF EVER-MARRIED WOMEN IN PAKISTAN:
A FORMATIVE STUDY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
(POPULATION AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH)
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**

2007

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan may face an AIDS epidemic fueled by unprotected sex work, injection drug use, gender disparity, social injustice and poor HIV/AIDS related knowledge. Pakistani married women can be affected adversely especially due to their poor access to information on HIV/AIDS. Mass media can serve as a powerful tool to cope with this issue by reaching out to this huge population. The objective of this study was to explore the association between mass media and knowledge of HIV/AIDS among married women in Pakistan. This analysis used data from the 2001 Pakistan Reproductive Health and Family Planning Survey which sampled 6,579 ever-married women aged 15-49 years.

Multinomial logistic regression was used to assess the association between mass media and HIV transmission knowledge among those who heard of AIDS. Knowledge of HIV transmission modes was coded into 3 categories, “*no knowledge*” if no correct response was provided, “*some knowledge*” if 1 to 3 correct responses were provided, and “*complete knowledge*” if all 4 correct responses were provided. Logistic regression was used to measure the association of access to mass media with any awareness of HIV/AIDS or transmission modes among all married women. The logistic regression model categorized the dependent variable into dichotomous categories: “*no awareness*” if women never heard of HIV/AIDS or did not know any correct modes of HIV transmission and “*some awareness*” if women were aware of HIV/AIDS and knew at least one correct mode of transmission.

Findings showed that among those who had heard of AIDS (46%), mass media methods were positively associated with knowledge of HIV transmission modes. The most commonly identified source of information was TV/radio (88%), followed by relative/friend/neighbor (22%), husband (20%), newspaper/poster/pamphlet (16%), medical personnel (6%) and other sources (3%). Multinomial logistic model showed that when compared to women who did not have any knowledge on HIV transmission, women who received information from TV/radio and newspaper/poster/pamphlets were 2.8 ($p < .001$) and 2.2 ($p < .01$) times respectively more likely to have some knowledge, and 7.0 ($p < .001$) and 3.4 ($p < .001$) times respectively, more likely to have complete knowledge. Getting information from husband, friends/relatives/neighbors and medical personnel also had positive association with HIV transmission knowledge of women. TV/radio and newspapers/posters/pamphlets were each independently associated with complete HIV transmission knowledge scores ($P < .001$). Additionally, socio-demographic characteristics including urban residence and higher education of women and their husbands had positive associations with complete knowledge of HIV transmission, whereas age had no impact. Logistics regression showed that watching TV had positive association with awareness of HIV/AIDS ($P < .001$). Additionally, education and urban residence had positive association with awareness of HIV/AIDS and its HIV transmission.

For rural women and those with less education, health policies should consider HIV/AIDS education campaigns which combine mass media sources (especially TV) with other interpersonal methods, such as husband, peer and health provider communication.

**KEY WORDS: EVER-MARRIED / WOMEN / HIV/AIDS / TRANSMISSION
KNOWLEDGE / MASS MEDIA / PAKISTAN**

37 pp.