STUDY ON PREVALENCE OF ARI (ACUTE RESPIRATORY INFECTION) AMONG UNDER-FIVE CHILDREN OF A RURAL AREA OF MANIPUR, THANGA:
A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY
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ABSTRACT: BACKGROUND: Children are the most precious assets of a country and their health status is highly reliable index of nation’s health. OBJECTIVE: To determine prevalence of ARI among under-five children in the area and to assess its association with some selected variables. METHODS: A cross-sectional study was conducted among under-five children in the village from September to December 2007. A sample size of 390 (13*30) was selected and participants were examined after interviewing mother or care taker. Chi square test was applied for significance in the difference. RESULTS: Out of 390 under-five children 92.3% were sick in the last 3 months of visit. Majority of them (83.6%) were suffering from ARI with episode of 2.6/child in last 3 months. CONCLUSION: The commonest morbidity in under-five children is ARI.

KEYWORDS: Literate, overcrowding, general cleanliness of house, episodes, ARI.

INTRODUCTION: The health status of children is highly reliable index of nation’s health and is the most precious assets of a country and no country can afford to neglect the rights and health needs of a child. Of 2.2 billion children in the world, UNICEF estimates that 1.9 billion lived in developing world; one billion of it lived in poverty & deprived of at least one of seven amenities considered to be basic rights as shelter, water, sanitation, schooling, information, health care and food.¹ Major causes of deaths in the age group 0-5 years are preventable.² The seasonal patterns of morbidities in preschool children in Lucknow as annual incidence rate per 100 child year for respiratory, diarrhea, skin disease and pneumonia were 167, 79.9, 30.6 and 9.6.³ The present study is conducted at Thanga Village, Bishnupur District, Manipur to see ARI morbidity among under-five children in the area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS: A cross sectional study was carried out during September to December 2007, among under-five children at Thanga Village – only island in Loktak Lake, the only fresh water lake in the North East India. Sample size was calculated based on 50% prevalence rate⁴ as similar study considering the methodology and recall period of three months were lacking. The calculated sample size is 331 at 11% allowable error and at 5% significance level, however rounded to 390 as there are 13 leikais in the village. Sampling frame was obtained from AWW of each leikai (cluster) and selects 30 children randomly from each cluster. Verbal consent was sought before involvement.

Literate mothers are those who can read and write with understanding. Criteria for overcrowding were adopted according to Park K 19th edition, 2007 according to available floor space area of the room per person.⁵ General cleanliness of the house was assessed based upon observational findings on fly density, refuse disposal, drainage system and mosquito breeding.⁶ Nutritional status is assessed based on WHO weight for age criteria (2006).⁷ Episodes are calculated
based on at least period of three consecutive days free from symptoms and signs between next attacks. Chi-square test was applied to test for significance in the difference and SPSS 20 version and Epi Info Version 7 were used for analysis.

RESULTS: Table 1 show that out of 390 children, most of them are living in nuclear family (91.5%), kutcha type of house (96.7%) and 77.2% of them also lived overcrowded as per available floor space area. Sex distribution according to age categories i.e. < 1yrs, 1-3yrs and 3-5 yrs. are more or less similar in rate. On observatory finding of general cleanliness of house including courtyard 85.9% of children are satisfactory while 79.8% children were of adequate nutritional status. 80.5% children have per capita income ≤ Rs 1000/month.

Table 2 shows that acute respiratory infection (ARI) is the commonest disease in the community contributing 83.6% of children at least once in three months with episode of 2.61 per child however diarrhea is the next commonest cause with 34.9% prevalence during the period with 2.03 episodes per child per 3 months.

Table 3 shows the relationship between ARI morbidity and type of the houses of the study population during past 3 months. Most of the houses, 377 of the study population belonged to Kutcha type while 11 and 2 houses are Semipucca and Pucca type respectively. It is found from the table that the occurrence of ARI illness to children living in Kutcha type of house as compared to Pucca+Semipucca type of houses is not different (83.6% vs. 84.6%). Regarding the no. of episodes of ARI according to type of houses, out of 326 children those living in Kutcha type of houses suffered frequent attacks of ARI i.e. 63.5% during lasts 3 months as compared to children living in Pucca+Semipucca type of houses. On the contrary, out of 326 children having illness last 3 months 72.7% (8) children living in Pucca+Semipucca type of houses have only one episode during the period. The relationship is found to be statistically significant (p-value=0.034).

From table 4 it is observed that 301(77.2%) children are living in room overcrowded per space area. Out of 301 children living overcrowded, 260 (86.4%) of them have one or more attack of ARI during past 3 months from the day of visit whereas 74.2% (66) of children living without overcrowding per space area have attack of ARI during the period. The difference is found to be statistically significant (p-value=0.006).

DISCUSSION: ARI was the commonest disease (83.6%) of the children during the period of three months followed by diarrhea (34.9%), caries (16.9%), dysentery (6.7%), scabies (6.7%), worm infestation (5.9%), conjunctivitis (5.9%), measles (3.8%), pneumonia (1.8%) etc. The average episodes of ARI and diarrhea are 2.61 and 2.03 per 3 months period. Similar observations were found in studies conducted by Yurembam M et al (1993), Mukherjee DK (1979), Nwolisa CE et al (2005) and Bisrat F et al (1995) where ARI was the commonest disease followed by diarrhea, however the prevalence rate of the two diseases are comparatively high in the present study. Reasons may be the unique topographical condition of the area where drainage system and latrine outlets were drained to Loktak Lake which is the main source of drinking water. Moreover, personal hygiene, household cleanliness and environmental sanitary conditions are poor. Houses are densely built and most living rooms were overcrowded. To make conditions worst, there was an episode of flood one month before the study.
From table 3 it is observed that type of houses has no relationship with ARI morbidity (p=0.78) whereas there is significantly increased episodes of ARI in those children living in kutcha type of houses (62.3%) as compared to children living in pucca and semipucca house (37.7%). The relationship is statistically significant (p-value=0.034). The possible reason could be that most of the children who had at least an attack in the last 3 months had another episode in the duration. However, the relationship has an indication that there is positive association of ARI with kutcha type of house as compared to better housing.

Maximum, 86.4% of children living in overcrowded room have ARI morbidity as compared to other children living without overcrowding (74.2%). Overcrowding of living room of study population per space area has significant positive relationship (p-value=0.006) with ARI morbidity. Similar association is reported by Bipin Prajapati\(^1\).

**Strength of the study:** There is internal validity; regarding ARI, external validity can be considered.

**Limitation:** Recall period of three months could lead to memory bias and study design itself is also a limitation.

**CONCLUSION:** The commonest disease in under-five children is ARI which is present in children living in overcrowded house and/ or poor type of housing. Study with better design is recommended.

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| Characteristics                                      | Number (%)  | Mean (SD) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Type of family                                       |             |           |
| Nuclear                                              | 357 (91.5)  |           |
| Joint                                               | 33 (8.5)    |           |
| Type of house                                        |             |           |
| Kutcha                                              | 377 (96.7)  |           |
| Pucca + Semipucca                                    | 13 (3.3)    |           |
| Overcrowding per space area                          |             |           |
| Yes                                                  | 301 (77.2)  |           |
| No                                                   | 89 (22.8)   |           |
| General cleanliness of house including courtyard – observatory findings |           | NA        |
| Poor                                                 | 55 (14.1)   |           |
| Satisfactory                                         | 335 (85.9)  |           |
| Nutritional status                                   |             |           |
| Low                                                  | 79 (20.3)   |           |
| Normal                                               | 311 (79.8)  |           |
| Literacy status of mother                            |             |           |
| Illiterate                                           | 82 (21)     |           |
| Literate                                             | 308 (79)    |           |
| Per capita income in Rs per month                    |             |           |
| ≤1000                                                | 314 (80.5)  | 730.27 (455.8) |
| >1000                                                | 76 (19.5)   |           |
| Age in year                                          |             |           |
| <1                                                   | 77 (19.7)   | 30.16 (17.28) |
| 1-2                                                  | 69 (17.7)   |           |
| 2-3                                                  | 66 (16.9)   |           |
| 3-4                                                  | 94 (24.1)   |           |
| 4-5                                                  | 84 (21.5)   |           |
| Birth order                                          |             |           |
| 1                                                    | 139 (35.6)  | 2.19 (1.22) |
| 2                                                    | 122 (31.3)  |           |
| 3                                                    | 74 (19)     |           |
| 4                                                    | 34 (8.7)    |           |
| ≥ 5                                                  | 21 (5.4)    |           |

Table 1: Showing different characteristics of under-five children
Table 2: Distribution of diseases encountered in the study population with episodes during last 3 months period (n=390)

| Sl. No. | Type of diseases | No. of children affected (%) | Frequency | Episodes per child in 3 months |
|---------|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1       | ARI              | 326(83.6)                   | 852       | 2.6                           |
| 2       | Diarrhea         | 13634.9)                    | 276       | 2                             |
| 3       | Caries           | 66(16.9)                    | 66        | 1                             |
| 4       | Dysentery        | 26(6.7)                     | 30        | 1.15                          |
| 5       | Scabies          | 26(6.7)                     | 27        | 1.04                          |
| 6       | Worm infestation| 23(5.9)                     | 24        | 1.04                          |
| 7       | Conjunctivitis   | 23(5.9)                     | 23        | 1                             |
| 8       | Measles          | 15(3.8)                     | 15        | 1                             |

Table 3: Distribution of ARI morbidity according to type of houses

(For analysis columns for semipucca and pucca are clubbed together.)
(Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages to respective total)

| ARI morbidity | Type of house | Total | p-value (Yates correction) |
|---------------|---------------|-------|---------------------------|
|               | Kutcha        | Semipucca | Pucca |                      |
| Yes           | 315(83.6)     | 62(16.4) | 1(0.3) | 326(83.6) |
| No            | 62(16.4)      | 10(90.9) | 1(50)  | 64(16.4)  |
| Total         | 377(96.7)     | 11(2.8)  | 2(0.5)  | 390(100)  |

Table 4: Distribution of ARI morbidity of the study population according to overcrowding per space area

(Figures in the parentheses indicate percentages to respective total)

| ARI morbidity | Overcrowding per space area | Total |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-------|
|               | No                          | Yes   |       |
| Yes           | 66(74.2)                    | 260(86.4) | 326(83.6) |
| No            | 23(25.8)                    | 41(13.6)  | 64(16.4)  |
| Total         | 89(22.8)                    | 301(77.2) | 390(100)  |

X² = 7.479, p-value = 0.006
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