

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Hepatitis B is the most important infectious occupational hazard which health care workers encounter. Approximately one health care worker dies each day from hepatitis B and nurses represent the highest risk population. However, since existing treatment for HBV infections does not provide a complete cure, prevention remains vital.

**Objective:** The aim of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitude and practices of nurses and midwives towards the prevention of HBV infections in Maracha and Arua regional referral hospitals in order to establish interventions that may lead to optimal HBV prevention.

**Methods:** A cross sectional study design was used. Convenient sampling technique guided the recruitment of 133 practicing midwives and nurses who worked in Maracha and Arua regional referral hospitals from January to September 2016. A structured questionnaire and observational checklist were used to collect data which was later entered and analyzed using SPSS version 16.

**Results:** Respondents had good knowledge, 112(84.2%) knew that HBV could be prevented by avoiding direct contact with blood and body fluids from patients and 103(77.4%) knew that materials contaminated with body fluids can be disinfected with sodium hypochlorite. The respondents had fairly low positive attitude, 127 (95.5%) perceived immunization against HBV is good, 101(75.7%) acknowledged completion of immunization while 84(63.2%) did not acknowledge post vaccine test and 77(57.9%) were uncomfortable with facial masking. On practice: only 60(48.4%) were fully vaccinated, 119(89.5%) changed gloves for each patient during blood taking, 80 (60.2%) resheathed needles, and 102 (76.7%) never washed hands before and after every procedure.

Conclusion: Based on the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that in spite of having good knowledge, the nurses' and midwives' had low attitudes and poor practices towards the prevention of hepatitis B infections.

Recommendations: Therefore, deliberate programmes of continuing and training should be designed for the target population, vaccines be continuously provided to enhance compliance and emphasize the uptake of universal precautions.