

## ABSTRACT

**Background information:** Transmission of infections often occurs during hair salon operations. Procedures involving use of items such as razors, scissors, combs, clippers and hairpins may be classified as infection risk procedures because these items can accidentally pierce the skin. Skin infections on the scalp and neck can be spread through hair operations. HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C can be transmitted through blood contact. Blood does not have to be visible on equipment or working surfaces for infection to be transmitted.

**Objective of the study:** The main objective of this study was to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices of hair salon operators on infection and prevention measures in salons in Kisugu, Makindye Division, Kampala District.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods: The study included 100 respondents from salons in 20 zones of Kisugu parish. A list of all the salons in these zones, were obtained and by simple randomly sampling, a selection of salons was done to randomly get respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, on socio-demographics; salon operators' knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to infection and prevention measures. SPSS file was generated using Epi data for analysis. Data was then presented in form of tables and graphs.

**Results:** A total of 100 respondents participated in this study: of these, 53.0% were males: 33(33.0%) respondents were from barbershops, 45(45.0%) from hair dressing salons and 45(45.0%) were from unisex salons. The dominant age bracket in this study was 25 to 50 years 55(55.0%) and many respondents had no formal education 47(47.0%). 74(74%) of the respondents knew that they would spread infections from one person to another during their daily salon operations; the common infections singled out, that could be spread in salons included HIV/AIDS 28(28.0%), Fungal scalp infections 7(7.0%) and Hepatitis B and C 6(6.0%). 39(39%) of the respondents reported that they change and use clean towels simply to impress clients. There was also a significant association between the respondents' attitudes and practices towards infection prevention with knowledge of infection spread ( $P < 0.05$ ). Respondents who had knowledge that they would spread infections during their work and found it not inconveniencing, were more likely to hand wash between clients ( $X^2 = 8.516$ ,  $2df$ ,  $P = 0.014$ ).

**Conclusion:** Hair salon operators with inadequate knowledge on infection and prevention measures in salons were found with poorer infection prevention practices: While infection prevention practices in accordance with guidelines are ordinarily considered safe, existence and alleged adherence to these guidelines were not seen in most salons, despite the fact that, it is the responsibility of hair salon operators to prevent the transmission of infections.