

EPIDEMIOLOGY

TESTING OF THE SKIN DISEASE – PRIMARY HEALTH CARE (SD-PHC) MANUAL AND INTEGRATION IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE OF NEPAL

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Introduction: Around 85% of the Nepalese population lives in rural areas where health care is provided by health workers in primary health centres, health posts and sub health posts. Although, Nepal government offers basic health care to all Nepalese population, the people in rural areas are deprived of specialist care as most of the specialists work in the cities. The research team developed the Skin Disease – Primary Health Care manual, which provides information on diagnosis and management of the 17 most common skin diseases contributing more than 80% of the dermatological disease burden in rural Nepal.

Objective: The objective was to provide dermatology care in rural Nepal by training the health workers to diagnose and manage common skin diseases.

Materials and methods: A total of 16 health workers from different health centres in rural Nepal were trained to diagnose and manage common skin diseases, based on the manual. On the first day of the training, there theory classes were conducted while on the second day, practical demonstrations were held.

The knowledge of the health workers was evaluated before, immediately after and three months after the training. They were instructed to record skin diseases with diagnosis and management at the health centres, for a period of three months after the training.

Results: The average score of the health workers was 60% before the training, 92% immediately after the training and 94% three months after the training. A total of 1412 skin diseases were recorded in the study period. Among all recorded skin diseases, more than 85 % were correct for the diagnosis and corresponding treatment.

Conclusion: The manual is effective, easy to understand and use. Therefore, we recommend the use of this manual by health workers in all the health centres in rural Nepal.

Key words: dermatology care, rural Nepal