Dear editor,

The number of people living with HIV has been increasing in every region. With 27 million pregnancies a year and an overall estimated 0.3% prevalence rate of HIV infection among pregnant women, it is estimated that about 100,000 HIV infected women deliver every year.[1] Using a conservative vertical transmission rate of 30% about 30,000 infants acquire HIV infection each year. In Maharashtra HIV seroprevalence is >1% in women attending antenatal clinics.[2]

This study conducted in a general public hospital for a period of one year, from October 2001 to September 2002, aimed at screening of antenatal mothers to find HIV seroprevalence, sociodemographic patterns in HIV seropositive mothers and reverse transcriptase PCR positivity in babies born of HIV positive mothers during first week of the birth. All pregnant women attending the antenatal clinics were screened for HIV sero-prevalence as per NACO guidelines. Reverse Transcriptase PCR (RT PCR) was done on neonatal serum samples, collected during first five days of birth and the test done as per instructions of the manufacturer.

During the study period, 2550 pregnant women were screened for HIV and 1.86% (52) were found to be HIV seropositive. Of these 52 seropositive women, 47 gave consent for the HIV testing of their babies which were included in further studies. The average age of these women was 23.78 ± 3.75 years. Out of these 47 women, 76.6% were residing in slums and 25.5% comprised of migratory population. Among the seropositive women 42.6% had education till secondary level, while 38.3% were illiterate and 19.1% had primary education. In this study, 57.4% of the spouses were unskilled worker followed by 19.1% in service, 12.8% factory workers and 10.6% were drivers/cleaners. Primigravida women were 53.2% and 34% were second gravida. Of the 47 families, 93% were from low socio-economic class.

The mean time of collection of blood of the newborn was 2.85 days. There is no precise data available on the percentage of infants infected at birth.[3] The RT PCR done on the neonatal sera samples was positive for 31.9% (15) babies indicating probable in utero transmission of HIV infection. Follow-up RT PCR is needed to confirm the transmission of HIV infection in these neonates. Among the women delivered by caesarean section, the rate of RT PCR positivity in infants was higher (10/16) than women who...
delivered normally (05/31). As the study group was small, the relationship between the caesarean section and the rate of transmission could not be established.

References


*M Mathur, S Taklikar, D Turbadkar
Department of Microbiology, Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College and General Hospital, Sion, Mumbai - 400 022, India

*Corresponding author (email: <drshripadt@rediffmail.com>)
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   • There is no data on follow-up of these patients.
     Authors’ Reply: The follow up of patients have been included in the results section [Page 3, para 2]
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     Authors’ Reply: The complications as seen in our study group has been included in the results section [Page 4, Table]