Abstract

A Study of Prevalence, Common symptoms and Risk factors of Reproductive Tract Infections among women in reproductive ages suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis

**Key words:** Prevalence, Common symptoms, Risk factors, RTI, RA.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to determine of prevalence, common symptoms and risk factors of RTIs among women in reproductive ages suffering from RA.

**Background:** RTIs are a major public health problem among women. They suffer more because of the synergistic effects of malnutrition, reproduction and chronic disease. RA is one of chronic disease which women of all ages bear a disproportionate burden of that and its impact compared with men.

**Method & Material:** Data was collected through questionnaire, clinical examination and laboratory tests for determining Candida Vaginalis (CV), Bacterial Vaginosis (BV), Trichomona Vaginalis (TV) and syphilis from 400 RA women among 15-49 years.

**Results:** Of the 400 women, 157 (39.3%) was diagnosed with RTI, out of them 32.0% had BV, 6.5% CV and TV in 0.8% women was observed. No women were reported for syphilis. The most common symptoms of RTI were vaginal discharge (28.3%), itching (25.8%) and low back pain (20.5%). Several independent risk factors were identified- younger women( 15-30 years), small residence (1-2 rooms), public toilet use, coitus during menses, not washing genital area post coitus, using improper linen for menstruation bleeding, certain anti-rheumatoid medications and difficulty/inability in certain physical activities(bathing, use of toilet, lifting/carrying groceries) and also reporting nervous a little of the time. In multivariable analysis, only five factors remained significant-women under 30 years (AOR: 2.4, 95% CI: 1.2-4.9), small residence (AOR: 2.5, 95% CI: 1.2-5.1), improper linen for menstruation bleeding (AOR: 1.9, 95% CI: 1.1-3.3), limited moderate activities in quality of life questionnaire (AOR: 1.4, 95%CI: 1.1-2.6) and oral disease modifying anti rheumatic drugs (AOR: 3.96, 95% CI: 1.9-7.9).

**Conclusion:** Almost two-fifth of young RA women suffered from RTI, hitherto has not been considered, should be of great concern and highlights the need to raise awareness of RTI among RA women. Important risk factors concern personal
hygiene and small residence (poverty), functional disability and some medicine use, several of which may be prevented with education and awareness.