Effectiveness of thalassemia prevention program on couples knowledge and carriers and marriage avoidance in Gorgan province- Iran

Abstract

**Background&Objective:** Thalassemia is the most common genetic disorder, 2-3 million carriers and 20 thousands with major thalassemia exist in our country. National prevention program of thalassemia started in 1998 and to encourage carriers to dispense marriage with increasing their knowledge was its main strategy. This study was designed to determine the effectiveness of thalassemia prevention program on couples knowledge and carriers and marriage avoidance in Gorgan province- Iran

**Materials&Methods:** In this cross-sectional study, the data were collected by the questionairies which their validity and reliability were already confirmed. The sample population consist of 282 couples which were going to get married 107 couple with minor thalassemia which cancelled their marriage during 1998-2003 were also included in the sample poulation in this research. The detailed study were carried out on whole subjects. Data were entered into the SPSS and analyzed by chi-square, t-test and ANOVA.

**Results:** In 282 couples, mean age was 20.5 on women and 24.86 in men, 57.8% were urban residents, 39.4% were relatives. Most of men had self-employed job and women were house keeper and half were under high school diploma. Distribution of knowledge level: 2.5% weak, 9.2% moderate, 53.2% good and 29.1% excellent. Relationship between knowledge and educational state, residency and job was meaningful (P<0.05), and there was not any relationship with age, gender and familial relativity. Ten couples were carrier that two of them were avoided from marriage. Also 43% of 107 carrier's couple whom were diagnosed in 1998-2003 avoided to get married, meaningful relationships between subjects residency, education status and relativity (P<0.05).

**Conclusion:** In spite of having a good knowledge, but some of the samples population in this study, did not show a suitable practice and most of high risk couples enter into marriage.

**Key Words:** Thalassemia- Prevention- Knowledge- Pre-marriage consults