

# **Role of Public Service Educational Messages in Educating People about the Perceived Risk of Hepatitis**

Moneeba Iftikhar & Muhammad Kamran Mughal

## **Abstract**

*Public Service Educational Messages are well known in the health sector. This study investigates the “Role of Public Service Educational Messages (PSEM) in educating people about Perceived Risk of Hepatitis” through survey method using questionnaire as a tool of data collection. The researcher conducted a survey on the sample of 500 people, comprising both healthy and patients. It examines Public Service Educational Messages for educating masses about hepatitis and changing attitude and behavior of people towards their health for the preventive measures of hepatitis. It recorded the role of Government and NGO’s in educating the people and creating awareness among them about perceived risk of hepatitis and the change their behaviors and level of consciousness for maintaining their health.*

**Keywords:** Public Service Messages, Perceived Risk, Hepatitis, Awareness

## **Introduction**

The Public Service Educational Messages (PSEM) is meant to provide education about social issues and to put it on the public agenda. Public service educational message, as tool of mass media, are brief messages designed to alter people's attitudes and behaviors about serious social issues, reach millions of television viewers daily. Most often Public Service Educational Messages focus on the promotion of health (Currie, 2010). Sometimes it is hard to unroll the message around globe, thus in order to spread the word faster and to educate individuals about a crucial issue, public service educational message (PSEM) are constructed and executed through mass media as a tool about health issues regarding its dangers, symptoms and precautions.

The idea of 'healthy lifestyle' is dominant force in disease prevention and health promotion advertisements. It is considered a significant factor in the adoption of both 'health impairing habits' and 'health protective behaviors'. Numerous government organizations and health associations have sought to educate and persuade public to adopt health practices or to avoid behaviors that pose a risk to health. Under their public service obligation, the broadcast media have provided free slots for health Public Service Educational Messages, some TV channels have felt the responsibility allocate free space for these message (Aktin, 2001).

Most of the people are unaware of the importance of health, that's why many diseases are common among them. Health communication campaigns aim to change behavior or educate populaces about specific disease. Corporations of Ministry of health and NGOs launch those campaigns and make efforts in making people conscious and persuasive toward health and diseases (Iftekhara, 2002).

Public service educational messages tackle varying health related social issues like drugs abuse, AIDS, HCV, safe driving, family planning, Smoking tobacco, obesity & cleanliness in televised

spots. Behavioral change that is brought about by public service announcements is related to four classes of variables: attention, comprehension, motivation, and attitudes. Currently a lot of attention is given to the role of educational messages in the society.

Hepatitis (HCV) is known as an infection causing swelling and inflammation of the liver may lead to cirrhosis or cancer that contact with limited or no symptoms. Government and NGOs efforts have led to a decline in the number of cases, in Pakistan and due to public service educational messages on hepatitis. HCV prevalence in the study area is higher than the overall prevalence in Pakistan. HCV related knowledge and awareness among population in the area is inadequate. There is a need to undertake a large scale population based epidemiological study and to introduce health interventions to control and reverse the spread of HCV in the area and to impart health education and awareness to the masses. Public health authorities are giving education about hepatitis through print and electronic media as due to non-implementation of international standards regarding surgical procedures are the main sources of transmission of HCV (Akhtar, S., &Rozi, S., 2009).

The aim of present study was to determine the role of specified public service educational messages and perceived risk of hepatitis among people and also measuring the behavioral intention of people after watching the Educational messages about hepatitis for public service. The messages contain knowledge and educate them to bring change in their behavior towards health issues.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To find out the correlation between of public service educational message on preventive measures of hepatitis.
- To scrutinize the significant relationship between of these messages on the behavioral intention of people.

- To examine the change in people's behavior in adoption of precautionary measures.
- To know how many people adopt preventive measure of hepatitis after watching these messages.

## **Literature Review**

### **Public Service Educational Messages**

Public service educational messages are informative short films made with the purpose of increasing the awareness and creating behavioral changes (İnci, Sancar&Bostanci, 2017). Health messages are used to change the behaviors of people, in these messages target specific audiences. PSAs create awareness among people and gives instruction to the people about health (Maria Georgiasis, 2013).

Public Service Messages are noncommercial advertisements that tries to modify public attitudes and behavior by raising awareness about specific issues (Klimes, Dougan& Lee, 2010).In recent years, PSEMs have been started to being broadcasted on Internet as an alternative advertising media (Walther, DeAndrea, Kim & Anthony, 2010). If produced correctly and broadcasted on the appropriate media tools, PSEMs are very important in educating, creating awareness, motivating, and informing various target groups for social issues (Toncar, Reid & Anderson, 2007).Effective health messages in the PSEMs have to change in people, and also change perceptions of people about their health risks. Through PSEMs show them advantages of recommended actions. They often use fear appeals for motivating attitude and intention change (Keys, Morant & Stroman, 2009). Media have positive impact on health related issues, beliefs, attitude and behaviors when it is used properly (Zimmerman et al., 2007). PSEMs that use internet, videos, television spots, brochures and posters are one of the most typical elements of the social marketing campaigns. The goal of PSEMs range from awareness to behavior

change (Reichert, Heckler & Jackson, 2001).PSEM should present information in ways that are informative, attractive, new, useful and encouraging (Grow & Christopher, 2008). The pervasiveness of advertising makes it seem powerful and useful for health promotion (Wallack&Dorfman 1993).

### **Hepatitis**

Greater age and education levels of students were associated with increased knowledge and perceived risk. The knowledge and behavioral intention about hepatitis B among the nonmedical college students was low. (Zolghadr, Faramarzi&Mahboubi, 2014). Health education of the community regarding preventive measures from hepatitis B infection is intended for the public good (Gul, Yasmin& Anwar, 2013).

The risk of getting Hepatitis C infection can be decreased by avoiding unscreened blood transfusions, use of drugs, sharing of injection and syringes, unprotected sex with infected person, sharing personal items and prevention of hepatitis can be provided by giving proper education by Public Service Messages (Aliza Ali et al., 2013). In Pakistan people are unaware of most of the health related problems including HBV and HCV (Muhammad Naoman et al., 2013). Perceived risk refers to people feel they are at risk of threat about their health. When people will consider they are at some risks than they will try to decrease those risks (Zhao Hong & Li Yi, 2012).

Prevalence of hepatitis is lower among female than males. Knowledge of people about prevention and transmission of hepatitis C virus is insufficient (Jamil et al., 2010). When strong beliefs are met with perception of personal risk then the result will be positive behavioral changes (Rajiv et al., 2009). People have insufficient knowledge about hepatitis, and there is need to increase knowledge of people and create awareness among them with the help of government and NGOs both national and local level(Altaf Ahmed Talpur et al., (2006).

**Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)** is a rational choice model developed by Ajzen and Fishbein in 1975 and is an extension of Theory of Reasoned Action. Behavior of individual is determined by his/her behavioral intention, which is influenced by attitude of individual toward performing that behavior and the subjective norm (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005). Sometimes individuals have intentions to perform a certain behavior but this does not always translate into actual behavior as they are in control over performing the behavior. Ajzen therefore extended TRA to include a perceived behavioral control component, which combined represent, the TPB (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005; Ajzen, 1991).

The TPB predicts the intention to perform a behavior, by **attitude toward behavior**. These attitudes are themselves determined by behavioral beliefs: “considerations of the likely consequences of a behavior” (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2005). A person is likely to form positive behavior when he/she perceives that the consequences are positive. The more favorable the attitude, the stronger will be the intention.

### **Research Methodology**

This study is based on Survey method and collection of the data by purposive sampling. Researcher developed a questionnaire in order to measure the behavior and attitude of people. The respondents of the present study were Patients and General Public (Healthy People), and the sample size is 500 persons. Questionnaire includes 23 relevant and close ended questions to the study. Public Services Educational Messages of hepatitis is considered as independent variable. Attitude and Behavior of People have been considered as dependent variable.

### **Hypothesis**

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) are creating awareness among people about the perceived risk of hepatitis.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) are useful in changing the behavior intention of people to adopt preventive measures.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) are useful in changing People's behaviour.

**H<sub>4</sub>:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) affect the attitude and behavior of people to adopt preventive measures against hepatitis.

Respondents were divided into two categories Healthy People and Patients. Healthy people part of this study was 300 and patients of hepatitis were 200. For the collection of data researcher used survey method and convenience sampling. Researcher conducted survey on the sample of 500 people taken from Lahore to find out the knowledge and attitude of people about hepatitis and change in the behavior of people towards their health issues through these public service messages.

#### **Analysis of Healthy People**

Out of the total number of 300 97 (32%) were males and 203 (68%) were females. According to finding, majority of healthy people are conscious about their health. Females are more conscious about their health than Males. Slightest number of people are not health conscious. Out of 300, 100 (33%) respondents are sometimes health conscious. It was revealed during survey that majority of respondents (48%) agree that they should pay attention to those instructions given in Public Services Educational Messages. Information in ads on hepatitis create fear among people to make them more conscious about their health which 47% believe so and 11% strongly agreed.

Preventive measures which are given in PSEM are useful for people's health, through educational health messages 59% people agreed they improved their health because they became more

conscious about their health. Health related ads were useful for 53% respondents in spreading awareness regarding hepatitis, 27% respondents strongly agree that health related ads are useful, 6% respondents disagree, 4% strongly disagree with this statement and 10% showed their neutral response towards this statement.

Research explored that most people think that health related ads influence people to follow the instructions which are given in them. Large numbers of people had knowledge about the preventive measures of hepatitis and understand that it can target them at any age.

It was revealed during study that PSEM are changing the attitude and behavior of people towards their health. They perceive the information and implement in their daily life. Role of educational messages for creating awareness among society is admirable specially health awareness because health is the basic necessity of every individual, every society and every nation.

### **Analysis of Patients**

In this research data is also collected from 200 patients suffering from different diseases. The age of patients was between 20 to 70 years 93(46%) were males and 107 (54%) were females; 58% married and 42% unmarried. According to results, 54% patients were conscious about their health. Female patients were more conscious about their health than Males. The majority of respondents 46% were familiar with Hepatitis's Public Service Educational Messages; 27% respondents watched all of these PSEM (Breast Cancer, TB, and Hepatitis) and 17% respondents were not familiar with any public service educational message. It was revealed many patients have knowledge about hepatitis that is very common in Pakistan. As the results of the study showed 60% of patients take interest in public service educational messages, whereas 7% respondents think they should not pay attention to instructions. Information in Public Service Educational Messages on hepatitis creates fear among people to make them more

conscious about their health. A huge number of respondents i.e. 59% agreed that health of people improved and many people follow the instructions which are given in ads they think it's very useful for their health.

Health related educational messages were found helpful by 55% respondents in spreading awareness regarding hepatitis; 27% respondents strongly agreed; while 13% showed their neutral response. It means large number of respondents believed that health related ads are useful. They influenced 69% patients and they followed the instructions given hence the educational messages changed their behavior, only 5% patients were not influenced. It revealed that 67% of patients had knowledge about the preventive measure of hepatitis.

Public Service Educational Messages on hepatitis effect attitude of 62% patients and they gave up those entire things which are not good for their health. It was also discovered that 71% of patients feel fear for their life after watching the health related ads regarding hepatitis. Many patients i.e. 71% intended to give up all those things that can be cause of hepatitis. According to the results 80% of patients believed that preventive measures are useful for hepatitis and also 80% had knowledge about hepatitis that it spreads from one person to other by sharing toothbrushes, tweezers, comb, razors and unsterile medical equipment, and it is not spread by touching, sharing food, drinks and shaking hands. It can be said that public service messages are creating awareness regarding hepatitis among people and health of patients improved by 42% due to those messages.

The survey found that public service educational messages are changing the attitude and behavior of people towards their health. Attitude and behavior of 78% patients was changed and the follow the instructions which are given in them.

## Hypothesis Testing

**H<sub>1</sub>:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) are creating awareness among people about the perceived risk of hepatitis

### Correlations

|                               |                     | Importance of PSEM | Awareness Regarding Hepatitis |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Importance of educational ads | Pearson Correlation | 1                  | .532**                        |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                    | .000                          |
|                               | N                   | 500                | 500                           |
| Awareness regarding hepatitis | Pearson Correlation | .532**             | 1                             |
|                               | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000               |                               |
|                               | N                   | 500                | 500                           |

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For testing the significance of public service educational messages on preventive measure of hepatitis the correlation between usefulness of these ads with the influence and awareness that they spread about hepatitis shows significance result at 0.01 level of significance that show a positive relation between the two, shows that these ads have positive significance effect on people.

**H2:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) are useful in changing the behavior intention of people to adopt preventive measures.

### Correlations

|                                |                     | PSEM   | Public' behavioral intention |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------|------------------------------|
| Health Related PSEM            | Pearson Correlation | 1      | .323**                       |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed)     |        | .000                         |
|                                | N                   | 500    | 500                          |
| Audience' behavioral intention | Pearson Correlation | .323** | 1                            |
|                                | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000   |                              |
|                                | N                   | 500    | 500                          |

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For measuring the effect of these message on the behavioral intention of people, the correlation between health related ads influence people to follow the instruction with acts of people, shows significance result at 0.01 level of significance that show a positive relation between the two, shows that these ads have positive influence on people and they make intentional efforts to save themselves.

**H<sub>3</sub>:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) are useful in

**Correlations**

|                             |                     | Preventive Measures In PSEM | Usefulness for people |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Preventive measures in PSEM | Pearson Correlation | 1                           | .445**                |
|                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                             | .000                  |
|                             | N                   | 500                         | 500                   |
| Usefulness for people       | Pearson Correlation | .445**                      | 1                     |
|                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                        |                       |
|                             | N                   | 500                         | 500                   |

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

changing People's behaviour.

To check whether people got educated and change their behavior in adoption of precautionary measure. Variable about intentions of people and preventive measure they take as studied that shows positive effect of educational ads on people intention, at 0.01 level of significance.

**H4:** Public service educational messages (PSEM) affect the attitude and behavior of people to adopt preventive measures against hepatitis

### Correlations

|                                             |                     | Health consciousness | Effect On Attitude And Behavior Of Audience |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Health consciousness                        | Pearson Correlation | 1                    | .286**                                      |
|                                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                      | .000                                        |
|                                             | N                   | 500                  | 500                                         |
| Impact Of Attitude And Behavior Of Audience | Pearson Correlation | .286**               | 1                                           |
|                                             | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000                 |                                             |
|                                             | N                   | 500                  | 500                                         |

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For checking people adopt preventive measure of hepatitis after watching these messages, people view regarding preventive measures that are given in educational ads, checked with attitude and behavior of people regarding their health are tested that also shows significance result at 0.01 level of significance.

### Results

Findings showed that public service educational messages play an important role in the lives of public (patients and healthy people)

are intended to increase the awareness of the society and creating behavioral changes. The messages inform people about Hepatitis, its preventive measures; and educate people by showing them how they can live healthy life. It persuades them by giving reasons why they should change their behavior. They changed their attitude and follow the instructions which are given in educational messages and they give up those things which are not good for their health; these have really proved very effective for them and their family. Educational messages often use fear appeals because they can change behavior by motivating attitude and intention change.

Fear appeal promotes self-protective behavior among people. Information which is given in hepatitis educational messages created fear among them and they became more conscious about their health, after watching Public Services Messages on Hepatitis and go for preventive measures; when they feel fear about their health. When people are exposed to any precautionary advertisement on media especially TV advertisements ,it brings approximately 2.5 times more likely to have a higher knowledge of risks than those not exposed (Nogueira et al., 2019). Perceived risk is increased by designed messages because both healthy people and patients feel fear about their health they considered they are at risk; perceived risk refers to people feel they are at risk of threat to their health.

Both healthy people and patients get benefitted from those messages taking preventive measures. There is no age for hepatitis; hepatitis can develop at any age. Its means there is need for preventive measure of hepatitis to live more, on the other side patients believed that if they are not health conscious or care less than they will become hepatitis patient, they think they should be health conscious and then they will live more.

Public Service Educational Messages are very important in educating, creating awareness, motivating, and informing various target groups for social issues. Role of educational and awareness messages in among society is admirable specially health awareness

because health is the basic necessity of every individual, every society and every nation. The knowledge and behavioral intention about hepatitis among females was greater than the males.

### **Conclusion**

Over all the study showed that research questions and hypothesis meet to the findings and results showed positive answers. The purpose of this study fulfilled in disseminating awareness of hepatitis among people and perceived risk of hepatitis in people and also measured the behavioral intention of people after watching the Public Service Educational Messages about hepatitis. After watching advertising on hepatitis people have knowledge how they can protect themselves from hepatitis, and there is any change in the behavior of people towards their health issues through these public service messages.

It is confirmed that health related Public Service Educational Messages about hepatitis are actually developing health awareness among people (Healthy& Patients), Large number of people got knowledge about hepatitis through educational messages, and there is a change in their behavior after getting exposure to educational messages, they give up all those things which can be a cause of hepatitis in them. Any form of public service messages related to health which is based on minimal reasoning application and, in its place, depend on synthetic signals as the primary cause to change behaviour. For authenticating this notion, we have found out that fear appeal is most useful appeal to effects the attitude and bring change (Raza, Zia&Iftihkar 2018). It is suitable medium for getting information and creating awareness about health issues. Majority of people have changed their behavior and attitude after watching the Public Service Educational Messages on hepatitis. Information in ads on hepatitis create fear among people to make them more conscious about their health therefore they changed their behavior.

As far as the adaptation of these public services messages is concerned, majority of respondents after being exposed to public

services messages to take precautionary and preventive measures. Respondents considered health related messages, given by Ministry of Health more authentic and beneficial for them. However, some respondents either could not apply timely instructions or could not adopt it on regular basis due to some reasons which are financial constraint, some sociological reasons and carelessness as main obstacles in their adoptive patterns. However (Chaudhry et al., 2006) have proved that improving the health communication technologies can improve the situation to make people conscious and careful. And in this study it is fortunate that both disease victims and healthy people are equally conscious towards their health. It is observed that Government and NGO's are successfully educating the people and creating awareness among them about hepatitis, perceived risk of hepatitis was increased, and people (Healthy & Patients) have changed their behaviors and they became more conscious about their health after watching these PSEM. Moreover it is recommended for future that if some Educational meetings should be organized and combined with other form of media content, can increase positive outcomes of patients (Forsetlund et al., 2009).

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