

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Knowledge about HIV/AIDS among First Year Medical Students

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Abstract: *Objectives:* To study the awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS among the students. *Material and Methods:* A Cross sectional study was done among 141 students. The information was collected from them within 2-3 weeks of admission using pre-test semi structured questionnaire. *Result:* All students were aware of AIDS in terms of its definition and modes of transmission. About prevention and cure no significant difference was found between boys & girls. *Conclusion:* Incomplete knowledge about sign & symptoms of HIV/AIDS among the respondents.

Keywords: Knowledge, HIV/AIDS, Awareness.

Introduction

The HIV/AIDS epidemic represents the most serious public health problem in India. The epidemic of HIV/AIDS is now progressing at a rapid pace among young people. Studies have reported that young people form a significance segment of those attending sexually transmitted infection clinic & those infected by HIV [1]. India presently has 2-3.6 million cases of HIV/AIDS and is the second country after South Africa .AIDS is affecting many people in sexually active age group. Majority of the HIV infections are in the age group of 15-44 yrs, out of which 35% are in the age of 15-24 yrs [2-3].

In the present study an attempt was made to study the level of knowledge among first year (entrants) medical students who were admitted into BLDEA's Shri B.M.Patil Medical College, Bijapur.

Material and Method

It is a cross-sectional study, the study subjects were 141 medical students. The study period was within 2-3 weeks of admission to the college. The information was collected from them using a pre-designed questionnaire, the student were encouraged to give their frank opinion as their identity was kept confidential.

Result and Discussion

A total of 141 respondents were the study subject, among them 95(67.37%) were boys and 46(32.63%) are girls. All the students were aware of AIDS in terms of definition & causation. The knowledge about mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS was through sexual transmission, blood transfusion, unsterilized instrument, and mother to child transmission. No statistical significance was found between boys and girls regarding mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS (Table-1).

Knowledge	Boys		Girls		Total		Z Proportion P Value
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Blood transfusion	51	53.68	31	67.39	82	58.15	Z=1.59 P=0.11
Syringe & needles	46	48.42	25	54.34	71	50.35	Z=0.66 P=0.50
Shaving blades	5	5.2	1	2.17	6	4.25	Z=0.98 P=0.32
Sexual contact	19	20	23	50	81	57.4	Z=1.24 P=0.21
Mother to child	58	61.05	12	26.08	31	21.9	Z=0.79 P=0.42

Similar findings was observed by S. Deb [4] among nursing students of kolkata towards caring for HIV/AIDS patients. It was found that 100% of them are aware of HIV/AIDS in terms of definition & causation. Maria kuruvila et al [5] found that overall level of knowledge about AIDS was 64.91%. Males student were found to have better knowledge regarding transmission of AIDS than the female students.

Maximum number of subjects (both boys & girls) had knowledge that HIV/AIDS doesn't spread by touching, followed by eating, talking and by insect bites. G.S. Basavayya et al [6] in his study observed that 20% & 15% girls had false notion that HIV spread by kissing, playing together and mosquito bites. 62% of boys and 55% girls said that the main symptoms of

HIV/AIDS are loss of immunity, loss of weight, fever, diarrhea and infections. Maria kuruvila et al [5] in his study observed that 62.57% knew that infected patient need not show signs or symptoms of AIDS, 90.06% knew that an AIDS affected patients body could not defend itself from certain diseases. Another study among nursing students showed that 31.9% thought that AIDS is not at all serious and is just like having the common cold. Only 42.2% thought that everyone is susceptible to AIDS. 70% knew that AIDS involves loss of immunity and eventually opportunistic infections [7].

Unfortunately 10% of the respondents were of the misconception, that AIDS may be transmitted to health care personnel by examining the patient. Similar study by G.S. Basavayya et al [6] found that 5% of girls & 2.35% of boys were misconception about transmission to health care personnel.

There was no statistical association found between boys and girls about knowledge of prevention ($p=0.0951$) and cure ($p=0.252$). Similar findings was observed by G.S. Basavayya et al [6]. All the respondents were aware about preventive measures like condoms use, blood test before transfusion, avoid multiple sex partners and sterilization of instruments. 42(91%) of girls and 82(86%) of boys were willing to care the HIV/AIDS patients. Kubde et al [7] in his study found that 34.3% did not want to care for AIDS patients. Which is lower than the present study.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study highlights that 100% of them are aware of HIV/AIDS. However some of them had incomplete knowledge about sign & symptoms, spread to health care personnel. It is apparent that many health care professional like doctors & nurse feel that they have inadequate clinical and counseling skills to deal with HIV & its implications. Thus their should be training programme for health care professional like doctors, nurse & other categories. As there is no cure for HIV/AIDS and no effective vaccine to prevent HIV/AIDS infection till date.

Health promotion through extensive information, education and communication to influence the behavior of group of individuals is key element in efforts to limit spread of HIV and it remains the single most important component in National AIDS Prevention and Control Programme of any country.

There is strong need that school education must directly address stigmatizing attitude about HIV/AIDS because teachers play a pivotal role in imparting education.

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