

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF BOYS AND GIRLS ABOUT HIV/AIDS AMONG STUDENTS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: In present scenario, HIV/AIDS is considered as one of the major non curable disease of developing countries like India. And young ones form a significant segment of those attending sexually transmitted infection (STI) clinics and those infected by HIV. In India HIV/AIDS is a one of the major contributory factor in mortality and morbidity of people. **Material and Method:** For the present study total of 360 students from class IX-XII (both science and commerce) were taken as sample from 10 senior secondary English medium co-ed school of Udaipur, Rajasthan were taken through convenience sampling method. 6 students (3 boys & 3 girls) from each class were taken which constituted 36(18 boys and 18 girls) students from each school. Thus total of 360 (180 boys and 180 girls) students were obtained. The pre tested interview schedule was given to all selected students aimed to measure their knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS. The entire questionnaire was retrieved and analyzed using simple descriptive statistical analysis. **Result:** Among all the selected boys and girls it was found that majority were having awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS regarding general issues, mode of transmission, preventive measures and source of knowledge. Both boys and girls were having positive attitude towards infected person. **Conclusion:** Thus it has overall observed that majority of our young ones who are the pillars of future are aware of knowledge about this incurable and killer disease as about its full form, its curability and its consequence.

Key words: HIV/AIDS, Awareness, knowledge, attitude, students.

INTRODUCTION:

Today Today since detection of HIV infection in school children is growing fast in our country as they are exposed to the risk of being victims of HIV/AIDS- which was quite unknown to their predecessors a few decades ago. And young ones form a significant segment of those attending sexually transmitted infection (STI) clinics and those infected by HIV. (1) That is why it has been recommended that school can act as the center point for disseminating information and education on HIV/AIDS and thus school

education has been described as a “social vaccine”, and it can serve as a powerful preventive tool. In India, there is a wide gap between the inputs in the HIV/AIDS curriculum for schools and the actual education imparted.(2) As these young ones are valuable resources for the future of our country, it should be necessary to impart them with amount of information so as to protect them and their counterparts from suffering by this still an incurable killer disease. Thus present study was conducted with the

following objectives: (i) To assess the awareness of school children regarding HIV/AIDS; (ii) To correlate the awareness and knowledge in school boys and girls on various issues of HIV/AIDS; (iii) To provide suggestions for HIV/AIDS education in schools.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

For the present study total of 360 students were taken as sample from 10 senior secondary Private English medium co-ed school of Udaipur, Rajasthan were taken through convenience sampling method.

The process of selecting student was as follows: Students from class IX-XII were included in study. And both science and commerce students were taken from class XI & XII. 6 students (3 boys & 3 girls) from each class were taken which constituted 36(18 boys and 18 girls) students from each school. Thus total of 360 (180 boys and 180 girls) students were obtained. The pre tested interview schedule was given to all selected students aimed to measure their knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS. The entire questionnaire was retrieved and analyzed using simple descriptive statistical analysis.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Government schools were not taken under study.
2. Hindi medium schools were not taken under study.

RESULTS

I. Knowledge on general issues of HIV/AIDS: From Table 1, it is clear that 96% of students (94% and 97% of boys and girls respectively) are aware of full form of HIV/AIDS, but only 53% of them (50% and 56% of boys and girls respectively) believe that it can be cured and majority of them 96% (97% and 96% of boys and girls respectively) are aware of the fact that this disease kills the diseased person. A very important and positive attitude was given by 98% (97% and 98% of boys and girls respectively) students regarding their will to be tested for HIV/AIDS.

II. Knowledge on mode of transmission of disease: Table 2 reveals that majority of respondents 93% knows about its transmission through sexual intercourse (94% and 91% of boys and girls respectively) but knowledge regarding other modes such as from infected mother to child in womb (39%), blood transfusion (33%), needle type exposure (33%) and injecting drug use (15%) are still low. But it is very positive finding that majority of them knows that HIV/AIDS is not transmitted through casual contact (79%) and mosquito bites (76%) which shows that they are aware of facts and myths about modes of transmission of AIDS.

III. Preventive measures: Table 3 reveals that students knows about various preventive measures such as use of condom 73% (83% and 62% of boys and girls respectively), safe sex 68% (75% and 60% of boys and girls respectively), use of sterilizes needle and syringe 56% (44% and 67% of boys and girls respectively) and about use of screened HIV blood 44% (47% and 42% of boys and girls respectively).

IV. Source of knowledge about HIV/AIDS: It can be clearly seen from the Table 4 electronic media 83% (83% and 84% of boys and girls respectively), social networking 76% (80% and 72% of boys and girls respectively) and posters 67% (64% and 70% of boys and girls respectively) are considered as major sources of providing information about disease. On the other hand newspaper, magazines & books, lectures, hoardings and peer group (58%, 56%, 50% & 26% respectively) are also the good sources for their knowledge about the disease.

V. Attitude towards infected person: The data obtained in Table 5, shows the positive attitude of students towards infected person. 93% students (89% and 97% of boys and girls respectively) wish to give them love and care and 90% (84% and 97% of boys and girls respectively) wish to help them by prayers. On the other hand 79% (75% and 83% of boys and girls respectively) said that they will treat them as normal human being and 76% (69% and 83% of boys and girls respectively) wish them to

support them. On the contrary only 18% said that infected people should be boycotted and on 3% were in favour of drive away these people from society, which shows attitude of them as ideal citizen.

Table 6 shows that there is high correlation between school boys and girls on issues related to HIV/AIDS, issues related to mode of transmission and their attitude towards infected persons but there is moderate correlation on preventive measures and sources of information.

DISCUSSION

In our study 96% students were aware of full form of HIV which was found to be contrast to the findings of study carried out amongst the students of secondary school in Haryana and Jamnagar.(3,4)

Low level of knowledge about general aspects and transmission of HIV/AIDS has been observed in students of secondary school in Kolkata.(5) In our study good level of knowledge was observed on mode of transmission of disease which is similar to the studies conducted in other countries were found to have higher level of knowledge was reported regarding mode of transmission.(6,7)

In our study higher level of awareness was found regarding preventive measures which was similar to the findings observed in school children of Haryana.(8) Studies conducted in other countries have also reported high level of awareness regarding use of condom for prevention of HIV/AIDS.(9-11)

A majority of senior secondary students in Chandigarh reported TV as most common source of information (9), which was found similar to the findings of our study.

Our study shows the positive attitude of students towards infected people which was incomparable with the students of college in Nasik who were having unfavorable attitude towards HIV positive patients.(12)

CONCLUSION

Thus it has overall observed that majority of our young ones who are the pillars of future are

aware of knowledge about this incurable and killer disease as about its full form, its curability and its consequence. Also majority of them are willing to be tested for HIV. Electronic media and social networking are proved as main source of proving them knowledge about HIV/AIDS along with other sources as posters, hoarding, lectures, peer group, newspaper, magazine and books. Good percentage of students knows about preventive measures such as use of condom, safe sex, use of sterilized needle & syringe and screened HIV blood. Majority of students are aware that sexual intercourse is most common mode of transformation and they are also aware of other modes such as blood transfusion, infected mother to child in womb, injecting drug use and needle type exposure and they know that it cannot be transmitted through casual contact and mosquito bites. There is lack of similarity in awareness and knowledge regarding issue on HIV/AIDS, preventive measures and source of information but there is similarity regarding issue of mode of transmission and their attitude towards infected people.

Recommendation: It is thus concluded that since our adolescent children are having awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. But still it is not 100%, thus school authorities and other concerned agencies should come forward to organize campaigns for the benefits of students and also all over the country so as to develop their understanding about HIV/AIDS. Teachers of school should give those lectures that help them in getting knowledge and awareness and school libraries should give them facility to promote easy access of material and retrieval of the disease.

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Table 1. Issues related to HIV /AIDS

Variables	Boys (%) N ₁ =180	Girls (%) N ₂ =180	Total (%) N=360	Z - value	p- value
Full form of HIV/AIDS	170(94.44)	175(97.22)	345(95.83)	1.119	0.263(NS)
Can it be cured?	90(50.00)	100(55.56)	190(52.77)	1.035	0.301(NS)
HIV/AIDS Kills?	174(96.67)	172(95.56)	346(96.11)	0.229	0.819(NS)
Willing to be tested for HIV/AIDS	175(97.22)	177(98.33)	352(97.78)	0.270	0.787(NS)

Table 2. Modes of Transmission

Variables	Boys (%) N ₁ =180	Girls (%) N ₂ =180	Total (%) N=360	Z - value	P- value
Sexual intercourse	170(94.44)	164(91.11)	334(92.78)	0.880	0.379(NS)
From infected mother to child in womb	50(27.78)	90(50.00)	140(38.89)	4.171	0.000(S)
Blood transfusion	54(30.00)	64(35.56)	118(32.78)	1.098	0.272(NS)
Mosquito flea/other insect bites	39(21.67)	46(25.56)	85(23.61)	0.765	0.444(NS)
Casual contact (hand shaking, hugging, sharing objects)	40(22.22)	35(19.44)	75(20.83)	0.574	0.566(NS)
Injecting drug use	28(15.56)	26(14.44)	54(15.00)	0.384	0.701(NS)
Needle type exposure (health care settings, needle stick injury, tattooing etc.)	70(38.89)	50(27.78)	120(33.33)	2.099	0.036(S)

Table 3. Preventive Measures

Variables	Boys (%) N ₁ =180	Girls (%) N ₂ =180	Total (%) N=360	Z - value	P- value
Safe sex(monogamous relationship)	135(75.00)	108(60.00)	243(67.50)	2.926	0.003(S)
Using condom	150(83.33)	111(61.67)	261(72.50)	4.344	0.000(S)
Use of sterilized needle and syringe	80(44.44)	120(66.67)	200(55.56)	4.285	0.000(S)
Use of only HIV screened blood	84(46.67)	76(42.22)	160(44.44)	0.848	0.396(NS)

Table 4. Sources of Information

Variables	Boys (%) N ₁ =180	Girls (%) N ₂ =180	Total (%) N=360	Z - value	P- value
Electronic media	149(82.78)	151(83.89)	300(83.33)	0.114	0.910(NS)
Social networking	144(80.00)	130(72.22)	274(76.11)	1.654	0.098(NS)
Posters	115(63.89)	126(70.00)	241(66.94)	1.098	0.272(NS)
Newspaper, magazines & books	106(58.89)	104(57.78)	210(58.33)	0.086	0.932(NS)
Lectures delivered on HIV/AIDS	60(33.33)	141(78.33)	201(55.83)	8.484	0.000(S)
Hoardings	88(48.89)	92(51.11)	180(50.00)	0.274	0.784(NS)
Peer group	70(38.89)	30(16.67)	100(27.78)	4.531	0.000(S)

Table 5. Attitude towards HIV infected persons

Variables	Boys (%) N ₁ =180	Girls (%) N ₂ =180	Total (%) N=360	Z - value	P- value
Loving & Caring	160(88.89)	175(97.22)	335(93.06)	2.768	0.006(S)
Prayer for them	150(83.33)	174(96.67)	324(90.00)	4.252	0.000(S)
Boycott them	40(22.22)	24(13.33)	64(17.78)	2.108	0.035(S)
Support them	124(68.89)	150(83.33)	274(76.11)	2.986	0.003(S)
Treat them as normal person	135(75.00)	150(83.33)	285(79.17)	1.734	0.083(NS)
Drive away them	8(04.44)	2(01.11)	10(02.78)	1.485	0.137(NS)

Table 6. Correlation between boys and girls students

S.No.	Various issues	Correlation (r)	P value	Strength of correlation
1.	Issues related to HIV/AIDS	0.99	0.003	High
2.	Mode of transmission	0.92	0.003	High
3.	Mode of prevention	0.31	0.69	Moderate
4.	Source of information	0.53	0.22	Moderate
5.	Attitude towards infected persons with HIV/AIDS	0.99	0.00	High