

AWARENESS OF AIDS IN UNDERGRADUATES OF SANTINIKETAN, WEST BENGAL

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INTRODUCTION

The origin of AIDS and HIV has puzzled scientists ever since the illness first came to light in the early 1980s. For over twenty years it has been the subject of fierce debate and the cause of countless arguments, with everything from a promiscuous flight attendant to a suspect vaccine program being blamed. So what is the truth? Just where did AIDS come from? The first recognized cases of AIDS occurred in the USA in the early 1980s. A number of gay men in New York and San Francisco suddenly began to develop rare opportunistic infections and cancers that seemed stubbornly resistant to any treatment. At this time, AIDS did not yet have a name, but it quickly became obvious that all the men were suffering from a common syndrome.

METHODOLOGY

Five Hundred Undergraduate students of Santiniketan, aged from 21-25 years were selected as subjects for the purpose of the study. The subjects were from both sexes. The research scholar went through the various relevant literatures pertaining to the present the study and prepared the questionnaire with the help of experts by the modification of the already existing questionnaire. This had been used in similar type of studies by Carey M. P. & scholars, K.E.E. (2000). Development and psychometric evaluation of the brief HIV knowledge questionnaire (HIV-KQ-18)

FINDINGS

The questionnaire method was used for collection of information and data. The questionnaire comprising of 40 statements and the responses of the questions were graded as YES/ NO/ DON'T KNOW. The questionnaire has distributed to 500 Undergraduate students of Santiniketan having age between 21-25 years. The research scholar himself collected back all the questionnaire after it was duly filled by the students. The questions covering various aspects like

basic information about AIDS/ HIV infection, what it is, what its give effect to the human body, how it occurred? How it spread from person to person, what are the symptoms of these diseases and how much students have interest, awareness towards AIDS? The tabular method was used to present the collected data with regards to the responses of the students were analyzed and reported in percentage form. The finding based in the analysis of the responses revealed that majority responded knew regarding basic knowledge of AIDS and HIV infection but on other hand they have so much confusion regarding transmission and symptoms of AIDS. It was also revealed that they were interested to know about AIDS/ HIV infection but at the same time they are not getting proper environment to satisfy their queries and curiosities. The majority of the students they answered correctly and they had adequate knowledge and awareness regarding following questions like: AIDS stands for acquired immune deficiency syndrome (Yes 99.6%). HIV stands for human Immune Virus. (Yes 86%). You know about sexual transmission diseases. (Yes 85.4%). Is AIDS Sexual Transmission Diseases? (Yes 77%). HIV destroys the body defence system. (Yes 80.8%). AIDS is same as cancer paralysis and heart attack. (No 83.8%). AIDS can only detected by blood test. (Yes 71.8%). Safe sex can help to keep the person away from HIV infection. (Yes 80.4%). Person can get HIV by sharing a glass of water with a same one who has HIV.(Yes 85.8%). Having sex with unknown partner can increase the chances of getting HIV.(Yes 73.8%) A person can get HIV by sitting in a hot tub or swimming pool with a person who has HIV. (Yes 78%). Athletes who share needles when using steroid can get HIV from the needles. (Yes 80.2%). Sharing of used blade has chances of getting HIV. (Yes 82.6%). A pregnant woman with HIV can give the virus to the unborn baby. (Yes 92%). HIV infected person looks like a normal person. (Yes 73.6%). Awareness towards AIDS cans only the precaution from AIDS. (Yes 82.4%). The percentages of responses on the following questions are not satisfactory and it revealed that the students were lacking with the kind of knowledge or information these are There is vaccine that can stop adult from getting HIV. (Yes 27.6% don't know 25.2%, total 52.8%). Some drug has been made for the treatment of AIDS. (Yes 41.8% don't know 14.6%, total 56.4%). Eating healthy food can help person away from AIDS. (Yes 22.6% don't know 9.4%, total 32.01%). There are only three modes of transmission that is sexual transmission, blood transmission and mother to child transmission. (Yes 26.6% don't know 8%, total 34.6%). AIDS occur only because of sex. (Yes 21.2%, don't know 19.4%, total 40.6%) You know how to do safe sex. (Yes 19% don't know 14.6%, total 33.6%). There is female condom that can help woman from HIV infection. (Yes 24%, don't know 18.6%, total 33.6%) HIV infected fluid does not have a path into another person body then infection does not take place.

(Yes 23.6% don't know 28.6%, total 52%). Body fluids like blood semen menstrual blood, vaginal fluid contain high enough concentration of HIV/AIDS. (Yes 12.4% don't know 42.2%, total 54.6%). Getting bitten by infected person can transmit of HIV. (Yes 25.4% don't know 39.2%, total 64.36%). Socializing and casually living with HIV/AIDS infected person can transmit of HIV. (Yes 14%, don't know 45%, total 59%). Getting bitten by mosquito that has already bitten an infected person can spread HIV. (Yes 38.2% don't know 9.8%, total 48%). A person can get HIV by sitting in a toilet seat. (Yes 5.8% don't know 49.2%, total 55%). Coughing and sneezing can spread HIV. (Yes 10.6% don't know 34.8%, total 45.4%). A person can get HIV through contact with saliva, tears sweat and urine. (Yes 21%, don't know 18.8%, total 39.8%) Weight loss greater than 10% of the body weight is the major sign of AIDS. (Yes 16.2% don't know 27%, total 43.2%). Continues fever for a period of more than one month is the major sign of AIDS. (Yes 16.4% don't know 24.2%, total 40.6%). You can usually tell if someone have HIV by looking at them (Yes 20.8%, don't know 23.4%, total 44.2%). There were some questions in the questionnaire which showed that the students have interest to know about AIDS and they responded in favour with high percentage. The questions were should there be AIDS education compulsory in school? (Yes 93%). Do you feel shy to talk about AIDS with your parents and teacher? (Yes 47.2%, 48.4%). Is there any teaching about AIDS in your school? (Yes 49.6%, 45.6%). Should awareness discuss in class? (Yes 82.8%). Should we demand for certificate of "non HIV infected person" before going to marry? (Yes 71.6%).

CONCLUSIONS

On the bases of the findings of the study the following conclusions have been drawn:-

1. The Undergraduate students of Santiniketan had adequate basic knowledge of AIDS/HIV diseases. But to impart information regarding prevention and its awareness, the society must intervene much seriousness and attention for healthy society.
2. It was also concluded that the students have some hazy picture in their mind regarding body fluids that contains high concentration of HIV, what would be the best means to take precautions etc.
3. It was also found that AIDS education should be a mandatory education in curriculum to enhance awareness to the coming generation of society with knowledge in depth.

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