

Knowledge and awareness of HIV/ AIDS among rural adolescent girls

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to examine the knowledge and awareness level regarding the HIV/AIDS among rural adolescent girls. A sample of two hundred and forty adolescent's girls living in rural area constituted the sample of the study. Out of which one hundred and twenty girls were from Junior Intermediate and one hundred and twenty were from Senior Intermediate studying Science and Arts groups. To measure the HIV/AIDS knowledge and awareness level of adolescent girls the HIV/AIDS Knowledge and awareness questionnaire was used. The tool was administered to the students, the collected information was subjected to statistical analysis and the findings were drawn. Majority of the Intermediate girls had very low knowledge and awareness among the spread of HIV/AIDS. Intermediate girls studying in arts group had less awareness on spread of HIV/AIDS when compared to girls studying in science group.

Key Words : Knowledge, Awareness, Adolescent, HIV/AIDS

INTRODUCTION

The lack of knowledge in today's world is a major issue which is causing the spread of many dangerous health problems including AIDS. AIDS an acronym for acquired immune deficiency syndrome has become a global crisis. Since its recognition in 1981, HIV/AIDS has become the most serious infectious disease in the world. According to WHO, it is estimated that there are 4 million people living with HIV in the South-East Asia Region, constituting nearly 11.8% of HIV globally. In India, an estimated 2,70,000 new HIV infections and 2,50,000 adult and child deaths due to AIDS were reported in 2010. Against the background that more than half of newly infected HIV adolescents are females, the knowledge and awareness of female adolescents on HIV/AIDS is of paramount concern in developing countries with high risks of transmission. Adolescence is one of the most crucial stages in the life of an individual, metamorphosing from being a child into becoming responsible adults. It establishes a strong foundation for adulthood, which propels one to move in the right direction with a right influence and a lack there of resulting in disastrous consequences, generating an economically productive but a morally precarious population.

Adolescence is a stage of physiological, mental and social transformation which accompanies inquisitiveness, impulsiveness and experimentation, makes them prone for risky health behaviors. These behaviors make them vulnerable to diseases especially sexually transmitted diseases like

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AIDS. HIV and AIDS has a great negative effect amongst students both at primary and secondary level if no proper measures are put in place to avert them. School and College students especially those at secondary level are much more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because their social, emotional and psychological development is incomplete, they tend to experiment with risky behaviour, often with little awareness of the danger. Nevertheless, most young people have limited knowledge about HIV/AIDS, largely because the society makes it difficult for them to obtain information. At the same time, social norms and expectations, along with peer opinion, affects young people thereby exposing them to risky behaviour. HIV/AIDS awareness initiative is a collective responsibility that is not limited to the health sector only. As children are a valuable resource for the future of a country, it is imperative that they be equipped with ample amount of information so as to protect themselves and their counterparts from falling prey to this still an-incurable killer disease. In the view of above facts, the present study was undertaken with the objective to asses the knowledge and awareness of adolescent girls studying in Intermediate college regarding HIV/AIDS.

Objectives :

1. To know about the knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescent girls.
2. To know whether knowledge and awareness differs among students in science and arts group.

METHODOLOGY

A total sample of 240 adolescent girls in the age group of 15-16 yrs (120) and 16-17 years (120) who are studying in junior and senior Intermediate of government college constituted the sample of the study. The samples were selected randomly and were administrated with two tools. The first tool was General Information Schedule which included class, age and group of study. The second tool constituted of a questionnaire to assess the knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescent girls. The collected data was administered for statistical analysis using SPSS version and the results were analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the socio demographic profile of adolescent girls according to their class, age and group of study. It is clear from the table that there were 120 Junior Intermediate girl students in the age group of 16 years studying in arts and science subjects. 120 Senior Intermediate girl students in the age group of 17 years were studying in arts and science groups.

Table 1 : Shows the demographic profile of the sample according to class, age and group of study

| Sr. No. | Variable | Number | Percentage |
|---------|----------|---------------------|------------|
| 1. | Class | Junior Intermediate | 120 |
| | | Senior Intermediate | 120 |
| 2. | Age | 16 years | 120 |
| | | 17 years | 120 |
| 3. | Group | Science group | 120 |
| | | Arts group | 120 |

From the Table 2, it is clear that 81 per cent of arts group adolescent girls had very low per cent of knowledge and awareness, 23.5 per cent had moderate scores and 05 per cent had good

scores on the knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among the adolescent girls. 19.3 per cent of girls studying in science groups had low scores, 77 per cent had moderate scores and 74 per cent had good scores on knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Table 2 : Shows the scores for knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescent girls for science and arts group

| Sr. No. | HIV knowledge and awareness score | Low scores | | Moderate scores | | Good scores | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | | Number | Per cent | Number | Per cent | Number | Per cent |
| 1. | Science group | 23 | 19.3 | 78 | 77 | 14 | 74 |
| 2. | Arts group | 96 | 81 | 24 | 23.5 | 05 | 26.3 |
| | Total | 119 | 100 | 102 | 100 | 19 | 100 |

The Table 3 shows the scores for knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among Adolescent Girls. Out of 240, 119 (49.6 %) had low awareness, 102 (42.5 %) had moderate awareness and 19 (7.9 %) had good awareness.

Table 3 : Shows the scores for knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among adolescent girls

| Sr. No. | HIV knowledge and awareness score | Scores | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--------|----------|
| | | Number | Per cent |
| 1. | Low score | 119 | 49.6 |
| 2. | Moderate score | 102 | 42.5 |
| 3. | Good score | 19 | 7.9 |
| | Total | 240 | 100 |

Conclusion :

The results of the study reveals that the knowledge and awareness of HIV /AIDS among Adolescent Girls is very low. Out of the total sample of 240 girls almost 50 per cent of them had very low awareness about HIV/ AIDS. 42.5 per cent of the girls had moderate knowledge and awareness. A very less per cent of 7.9 per cent girls had good knowledge and awareness about HIV/AIDS. Awareness program on reproductive health issues for students studying in arts group is to be incorporated in their curriculum. In our societies teachers and parents hesitate from discussing the issues related to HIV/AIDS to the adolescents considering a taboo. An integrated program on health issues and diseases related to it are to be taught for the adolescents for every quarter period in the college and school level to prepare the teenage girls to be physically, emotionally and socially healthy to keep themselves safe and fit.

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