

Prevent, Educate, Support: Advancing Human Immunodeficiency Virus/AIDS Awareness

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Human Immunodeficiency Virus and AIDS remain important public health issues worldwide. Many college students have heard about HIV/AIDS, but their knowledge regarding its transmission, prevention, and management is often incomplete or inaccurate. Misconceptions such as transmission through casual contact or mosquito bites still exist and contribute to stigma and discrimination. Young adults are an important target group for awareness programs because they are more exposed to social influences and information from the internet and media. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the level of awareness, identify misconceptions, and highlight the need for effective educational programs among college students.

Aim: To assess awareness and identify misconceptions regarding Human Immunodeficiency Virus/AIDS among college students.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey method was used for this study. Data were collected from college students using a structured questionnaire designed to assess their awareness and knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS.

Results: The findings of the survey showed that although most college students had heard about Human Immunodeficiency Virus, their knowledge regarding its transmission, prevention, and health effects was limited. Many students were aware of HIV/AIDS in general, but lacked an accurate and detailed understanding. Several participants also believed in misconceptions, such as HIV spreading through touching, sharing food, or mosquito bites. These incorrect beliefs contribute to fear, stigma, and discrimination toward people living with HIV. The results highlight the need for proper health education and awareness programs to improve knowledge and eliminate misconceptions among college students.

Conclusion: While basic awareness about HIV is present among college students, there is a need for continuous education to improve accurate knowledge and eliminate misconceptions. The significant improvement observed after the awareness session confirms that structured educational programmes are effective tools in promoting HIV awareness and prevention.

Keywords: Discrimination, Management, Misconceptions, Prevention, Questionnaire, Stigma, Transmission.

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