

## A Study to Know The Level of Awareness of HIV

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### ABSTRACT

A predesigned, pretested questionnaire was used to study based on the knowledge expected at their age regarding Human Immuno Virus (HIV) transmission, consequences on personal health and vulnerability. The questionnaires were answered independently. About 138 students in the age groups of 17-18 years and 19-20 years belonging to I, II and III year undergraduate students studying B.A. and B.Sc. courses were selected by means of randomized method. Simultaneously around 15 teaching staff of Arts and Science Departments were also selected for the present study. The data were collected, compiled and analyzed by comparing the different groups of students and staff. The trend showed that overall awareness regarding HIV/AIDS (Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome) was better among girls in the age group of 19-20 years. Regarding the magnitude of problems, both age groups were in similar level. About the symptoms, diagnosis and methods of sterilization, higher age group was more aware marginally. Surprisingly, the students of both the age groups have better overall awareness than the staff except magnitude, severity of the infection and methods of sterilization. Staff was marginally more aware than the students regarding social attitude.

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Majority of the girls are in the phase of adolescence during their study period. According to WHO, this period of the life extends from 10- 19 years. After the onset of puberty, there is sequence of events by which the individual is transformed into young adult by series of biological changes. These adolescent students should be well oriented about the reproduction, sexual behaviour and infections like sexually transmitted diseases more particularly regarding HIV/AIDS. Due to fading of the joint family system, adolescent students are hardly receiving the guidance of the elders. Unfortunately schools and colleges fail to impart proper education. They try to acquire knowledge from other sources which further cause panic among young minds. As a consequence they engage in unhealthy sexual activities rendering themselves vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. Teenage pregnancy incidents are common in India (Khan, 2002).

Adolescents represent about 21.8 per cent of India's population. There are about 207 million adolescents in our country whose reproductive health needs are ill served. The issues related to sexuality are not only a cause for concern during adolescence, but also causes immeasurable damage in adult life. Unprotected sexual activity may lead to unwanted

pregnancy, illegal abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Adolescent students are showing high incidence of STD and AIDS due to sexual experimentation (Aggarwal and Kumar, 1998). Few studies done in adolescent students recommended the need for sex education (Clark *et al.*, 2002).

### Justification of the study:

Premarital sexual activity is prevalent in this modern society due to advancement in information and technology sector. Unplanned sexual activity will be usually unprotected. In developing country, 1 in 20 adolescents contacts the STDs which often go undetected or untreated (STD Surveillance Report, 2004 NACO). During 2005, these were on estimated 52 million HIV cases in the country. Out of which 38 per cent were women (HIV sentinel Surveillance Report, 2005, NACO). Country like India where talking about sex is a taboo, parents are not taking lead in providing the right knowledge. At the same time, teachers are not in position to educate the adolescent students due to feeling of embarrassment and uncomfortable feeling. Hence, it is high time to provide right knowledge of sexual reproduction and precautions to be taken to prevent the

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