College students’ sources of HIV/AIDS information, related HIV/AIDS knowledge and sexual risk behaviours.

Monique van Jaarsveld and Lynn Hendricks

Introduction

In this 21st century, the number of cases of young people suffering from HIV/AIDS and other STIs is on the increase. The number of campaigns informing people of the risks regarding risky sexual behaviour is also increasing and yet society has little to no decrease in the number of cases reported each year (James et al., 2004). The number of individuals infected by HIV/AIDS in 2011 was estimated at approximately 3.36 million, of which an estimated 16.6% constituted the adult population aged between the ages of 15 and 49 years of age (SASTATS, 2011). There is a need to conduct research on the relationship between college students, learn about HIV/AIDS; the amount and quality of knowledge these students have regarding HIV/AIDS; and these students’ risky sexual behaviours.

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive Disengagement Model (McKinnon et al., 1996)

Objectives and Hypothesis

Objectives:
1. To determine the sources of information on HIV/AIDS used by college students.
2. To determine the level of HIV/AIDS knowledge amongst the college students.
3. To investigate college students’ sexual risk behaviours.
4. To compare sexual risk behaviour in a sample of single students and students in non-marital monogamous relationships.

Hypothesis 1:
There will be a significant difference between the risky sexual practices between college students who are single and students in non-marital monogamous relationships.

Methodology

Sample
A descriptive cross-sectional quantitative study was utilized in which 359 students enrolled at a private tertiary institution in 2012 and participants were selected using non-probability purposive and convenience sampling.

Gender: 31.9% Male; 68.1% Female
Age: Median age of 20.4
Race: White: 68.8%, Coloured: 39.1%, Black: 4.2%; Other: 7.9%
Relationship Status: Single: 50.4%, Non-marital monogamous relationship: 49.6%

Instruments

The questionnaire of 99 items consisted of:
1) Demographic Items
2) 21-item questionnaire addressing HIV-related sources (Huang et al., 2005)
3) HIV-Knowledge Questionnaire-18 item (Carey and Schnorr, 2002) and
4) The Problem-Oriented Screening Scale for the use of Teenagers HIV Risk Subscale (Rahdert, 1991).

Results

Sources of HIV/AIDS related information used by college students

The aim of objective one was to establish which sources of HIV/AIDS related information college students consulted. Figure 1 below provides a summary of the results found in the study.

Figure 1

![Descending ranked-ordered Sources of Information](image)

Level of HIV/AIDS related knowledge

The aim of this objective was to ascertain the level of knowledge students have regarding HIV/AIDS. Figure 2 below indicates that the participants had ample knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS.

Figure 2

![Ascending Rank Ordered Incorrect Responses](image)

Students’ risky sexual practices

Figure 3 below presents a visual representation of the main findings generated by the study.

Figure 3

![Risky Sexual Practices](image)

Relationship Status and Sexual Behaviour

A comparison of relationship status and sexual risk behaviours was tested in a group of n=359 college students using Chi-square Tests. Findings, as presented in Table 1, that shows a significant difference between groups are indicated on Table 1 below. For p = 0.05*, p = 0.01** and p = 0.001***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Non-marital Monogamous Relationship</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparison Item</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>p-value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Students at a private tertiary institution have ample HIV-related knowledge, however their knowledge do not relate to more health protecting behaviours. Non-marital monogamous relationships have been implicated as a possible risk factor for the contraction of HIV.

Recommendations

It is recommended that qualitative studies are conducted on the attitudes, perceived susceptibility and risk of college students being infected with HIV/AIDS. It is also recommended that further investigations must be lodged into relationship status and sexual risk behaviours.

References


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