

Knowledge and Attitude among Adolescents towards HIV/AIDS

Ahmed Bokhamseen* Bader Al Shammari* Maan Alsaai* Fahad Alotaibi* Nouf Moosa*
Randa Alsloom* Rawan Albraik* Saeed Bin Jabal* Saleh Alajlan* Talal Alwahhabi*
Khairya Moosa**

Background: HIV is an immunodeficiency caused by retrovirus. WHO defined HIV as a global health emergency. The inadequate knowledge, negative attitude and risky practices among adolescents are considered major hindrances in preventing the spread of HIV,

Objective: To evaluate the level of the knowledge and attitude among adolescents 16-19 years old towards HIV/AIDS and to determine the difference in the knowledge and attitude between adolescent males and females.

Design: A Cross-Sectional Study.

Setting: Shopping malls in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Al Khobar (Al Rashid Mall, Al Dhahran Mall, Foad Center and Qussaibi Village).

Method: Four hundred randomly selected adolescents were recruited in the study; 200 males and 200 females aged 16-19 years were questioned about their knowledge and attitude towards HIV. The data was entered and analyzed using SPSS 20.

Result: The majority of the studied group were aware of HIV and its mode of transmission; the major source of their information were from the media, 157 (39.2%). However, 44 (11%) never heard about it. However, females demonstrated a slightly better knowledge compared to males. The majority of the respondents had a negative attitude towards an HIV-positive person, avoiding shaking hands and/or sitting with them.

Conclusion: The surveyed adolescents had moderate knowledge and attitude about HIV/AIDS. The study highlighted some misconceptions about HIV transmission, intolerant attitude, stigma and discrimination towards HIV, which need to be addressed. HIV/AIDS related education programs should include specific interventions to change the practices.

* AGU Medical Students

** AGU Faculty