

Information Level, Risk Perception And HIV/AIDS Socio-Cultural Aspects Relation In Young People Of Itabuna, Northeast, Brazil.

S Matos, A Ramos, S Lima, K Borges, V Pacheco, M Moreli

Citation

S Matos, A Ramos, S Lima, K Borges, V Pacheco, M Moreli. *Information Level, Risk Perception And HIV/AIDS Socio-Cultural Aspects Relation In Young People Of Itabuna, Northeast, Brazil..* The Internet Journal of Health. 2008 Volume 9 Number 2.

Abstract

The Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is chronic and progressive diseases where the lack of knowledge and prevention increases the infection rate and contribute to young people death. The educational campaigns are pointed as the best alternatives of prevention. We aimed to explore essential points to approach in future HIV/AIDS preventive campaigns. We used the evaluation of a questionnaire completed by 450 individuals included in the research. It was concluded that the television was the main source of information about HIV/AIDS. The participants showed a good knowledge about general aspects related to HIV/AIDS, but they did not think themselves to be vulnerable to the virus. So this fact is very important to be mentioned in future campaigns in order to make it more efficient and to achieve all the proposed objectives.

INTRODUCTION

The Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a chronic and progressive disease that was describe as clinical entity, for the first time, in 1981, in the United States¹. Since then, it spread around the world, disrespecting borders, economies, cultures and ethnic groups².

It is estimated that more than 33.0 million people live with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)³. In 2007, 2.7 million people were infected and 2.0 million lost their lives because of infection³.

The first case of AIDS in Brazil was registered in 1981⁴ and, 28 years later, is calculated that there are 620.000 people infected in the country³. People between ages 13 and 29 account for 39.24% of the cases notified until 30.06.05⁵.

Many studies indicate that the young people know at least one form of protecting themselves from AIDS^{4,6,7,8} and recognize the necessity to use condom^{2,4,7,8,9}. It is also verified that there are gaps in the knowledge on HIV/AIDS¹⁰ so it is evident the lack of perception of risk by youth⁷.

Considering the decentralization of Health System, health politic adopted in Brazil, is hardly keeping the principles of integrality, equity and universality especially to the young people. It is necessary to pay a more specific attention to the

human plurality and differences between genders, regions, cultures and beliefs^{7,8,9,10,11}.

Bahia's state ranks seventh in rate of prevalence of AIDS in Brazil with 1169 new cases of AIDS per year¹². Thus, it was important to carry through a study to show the young people characterization concerning risk perception, information level and social-cultural aspects related to HIV/AIDS. This information is important for the planning of future campaigns can be directed to the main deficiencies of information related to HIV / AIDS among young people.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive-exploratory study, with a quantitative character developed from October 2007 to January 2008 in Itabuna city, state of Bahia, Brazil. The participants were passers-by between 15-28 years old, both genders. This study was conducted with a random population sample selection of 450 individuals.

The passers-by were briefed about the aims of the study and invited to participate. All participants signed the informed consent form. The points of approach were quarters of high-class, middle-class and low-class, high school, shopping center and squares.

The choice of such quarters, squares, school and shopping,

had as purpose to become the representative sample of the total of young of city in age group studied, considering the social, monetary and cultural inequalities.

The study consisted of collection of information using a questionnaire form based on the model used by Fernandes (1992)⁴. The questions were concerning socio-cultural aspects and risk perception related to HIV/AIDS. After the questionnaire, some interviewed asked for explanation related to doubts about HIV/AIDS, these readily were elucidated.

Finally, after finishing the 450 interviews, a data descriptive analysis. SPSS for Windows version 9.0 was used to analyze the data. Differences were evaluated using the Chi-square test with the Yates correction. A “P” value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

Of the 450 participants, 235 (52.2%) were women and 215 (47.5%) were men, their mean age was 19.34-years-old. The television was mentioned by 60% participants as the main source of information about AIDS, and the radio was the less mentioned, 2% of the participants (Fig. 1).

Figure 1

Figure 1. Main Information Source about HIV/AIDS

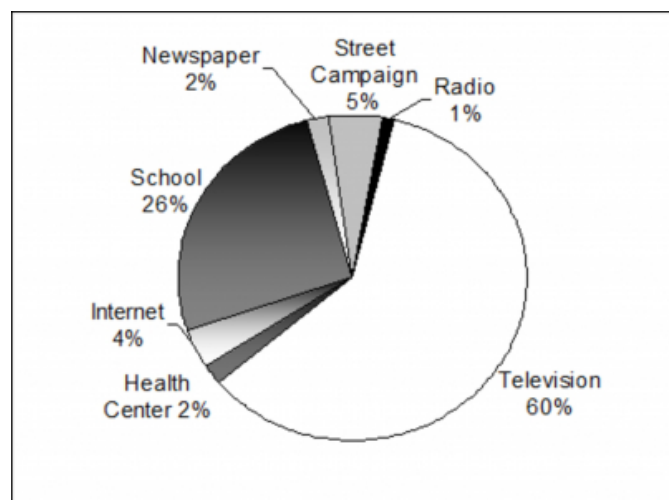


Table 1 presents the general knowledge about the disease. Only 44% answered that there's a remedy for AIDS, in this question we noted that the difference in answer “yes” between genders was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The existence of vaccine against the HIV was affirmed by 40%. The possibility of good appearance people have the virus was mentioned by 448 (99.5%) individuals, and 43 (9.5%) have affirmed that is impossible to have the virus and

doesn't show up any symptoms for years. When questioned if it's possible to find the virus in the blood, sperm or vaginal secretions 97%, 88.5% and 88.5% answered “yes”, respectively.

Table 2 presents the knowledge related to the non-sexual transmission of HIV. The major (90%) affirmed that blood transfusion can transmit the virus. About half of the interviewed (53.5%) have affirmed that the blood donation is a way of contamination. From the interviewed, 32.5% and 5.5% pointed the mouth kiss and the mosquito bite as possible ways of transmission, respectively.

Figure 2

Table 1 – General Knowledge about AIDS

| | Yes | | No | | don't know | |
|---|-----|------|-----|------|------------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Is there medication against the HIV? | 198 | 44 | 252 | 56 | 0 | 0 |
| Is there vaccine against HIV? | 180 | 40 | 268 | 59,5 | 2 | 0,5 |
| People of good appearance can have the virus? | 448 | 99,5 | 2 | 0,5 | 0 | 0 |
| People can have the virus and be without any symptom per years? | 407 | 90,5 | 43 | 9,5 | 0 | 0 |
| Can be found the virus in the blood? | 436 | 97 | 14 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Can be found the virus in the sperm? | 398 | 88,5 | 50 | 11 | 2 | 0,5 |
| The virus can be found in vaginal secretions? | 398 | 88,5 | 40 | 9 | 12 | 2,5 |

Figure 3

Table 2 - Knowledge about HIV non-sexual transmission

| | Yes | | No | | don't know | |
|-------------------|-----|------|-----|------|------------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Blood transfusion | 405 | 90 | 40 | 8,5 | 5 | 1,5 |
| Blood donation | 241 | 53,5 | 205 | 45,5 | 4 | 1 |
| Mouth Kiss | 146 | 32,5 | 302 | 67 | 2 | 0,5 |
| Mosquito Bite | 25 | 5,5 | 423 | 94 | 2 | 0,5 |

Table 3 presents the data from the socio-cultural questionnaire. The prevention campaigns against AIDS satisfy 66% of interviewed and the majority (72%) does not know anybody with AIDS. Only 5% of the studied population consider themselves to be prejudiced against HIV-positives, and 98% affirmed that is able to protect themselves from the HIV.

To 83% it is not hard to convince the partner to use the condom and 97.5% do not find any obstacle to get it (Tab. 3). When questioned about the vulnerability to the HIV, 76% believed not to be vulnerable (Tab. 3).

Figure 4

Table 3 - Social-cultural questionnaire

| | Yes | | No | | don't know | |
|--|-----|------|-----|------|------------|-----|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Are satisfactory the campaigns against AIDS? | 297 | 66 | 108 | 34 | 0 | 0 |
| Do you Know some one with AIDS? | 126 | 28 | 279 | 72 | 0 | 0 |
| Are you prejudiced against HIV positive? | 23 | 5 | 427 | 95 | 0 | 0 |
| Are you able to protect yourself from HIV? | 441 | 98 | 9 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Is it difficult to get condom? | 9 | 2 | 439 | 97,5 | 2 | 0,5 |
| Is it hard to convince your partner to use condom? | 72 | 16 | 374 | 83 | 4 | 1 |
| Do you consider yourself vulnerable to HIV? | 106 | 23,5 | 342 | 76 | 2 | 0,5 |

There was no significant statistical difference ($p < 0,05$) when the data were compared between genders, except the question related to the existence of a medication against AIDS (Tab. 1).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was designed to examine the differences of information level, socio-cultural aspects and risk perception related to the HIV/AIDS in young people. Our findings indicated that the television as the main source of information about HIV/AIDS (Fig. 1), therefore, it is a good alternative to be used to spread information. Other works also point the television importance to preventive campaigns^{4,11,14}. The second main source mentioned was the school, which can be related to the age of the population studied and show the importance of school environment to disseminate health public information.

At a research carried through 2004 by The National Program of STD and AIDS of the Health Department, it was found that Brazil has a good standing regarding the knowledge about HIV/AIDS were compared to others countries¹⁵. In our research, the young people presented a high knowledge level about asymptomatic carrier and corporal fluids where we can find the virus (Tab.1), this was also evidenced by Fernandes (1998)¹⁴ in similar research. However, so many people affirm the existence of vaccine and the lack of medication against HIV (Tab.1), probably because controversial information that appears in the media and the association between medication and cure at moment of performing the questionnaire.

About non-sexual contamination, the mouth kiss was mentioned by about 30% of the interviewed (Tab.2). Although this information isn't found in the Health Brazilian department campaigns, many people still believe that there's

a risk in this action.

Such as Szwarcwald (2004)¹⁵, a high percentage of individuals doesn't consider mosquito bite as a form of HIV transmission (Tab. 2), but there are doubts when the question is related to donation and blood transfusion (Tab. 2), probably because there is no participants discrimination between give and receive blood^{4,14}.

To young people there is not difficult to convince the partner to use condom and it isn't hard to get it (Tab. 3). The distribution of condom by the Brazilian government increased from 13 million to 260 million since 1994 until 2003⁹. In a research carried through 2005, it is estimated that 61.46% of young between 16-25 years old that has an active sex life has used condom in the last 12 months⁹. Although these data sounds as a victory to Brazil, some works show that offer the condom doesn't guarantee its use^{6,7,11}.

According to Silva (2002)⁸, there are gaps in the knowledge of youth about HIV/AIDS. His work with soccer junior players showed that this group had a high level of information about the HIV way transmission, but a low level related to AIDS. This group also considered themselves little vulnerable, although exposed to HIV. The condom use was 73% and 27%, with change and permanent partners, respectively.

The young people don't think they are vulnerable to AIDS and also think they are able to protect themselves from HIV (Tab.3), just like in Silva (2002)⁸. In a study carried out onpostpartum women interned with an average of 23.5 years, Praça (2003)⁷ noticed that 71% didn't have HIV/AIDS risk perception. The lack of risk perception is related to the belief that AIDS "just happens to the others" that is a thought of many young and other age group people too⁷.

Think not to be vulnerable to HIV is a very dangerous mainly to the young people. It guides to a reduction of the prevention at some moments. This lack of risk perception maybe related to the missing of continuous and specific campaigns toward the youth and showing the real risks and prevention necessities. It is not by chance that 34% of our interviewed still consider the prevention campaigns unsatisfactory (Tab. 3).

The Brazilian government spent R\$ 27.5 million with internments for AIDS in 2004 and it spends about R\$ 450 millions per year to guarantee the free distribution of anti-

retroviral for 170 thousands patients¹⁶. Part of this million could be saved if the prevention campaigns were more effective. Not always more expensive interventions have better results than the less expensive¹⁷. It is so important to consider the real necessities and characteristics of the target population and to plan meticulously the actions before start a campaign².

Educational intervention seems to be the best way to prevent AIDS¹⁷. A work carried through on university students in Zimbabwe compared the difference between participants and non-participants of a prevention program. It has been shown that the team that integrates the program has improved its attitudes, practices and awareness related to the equity of genders and prevention against HIV/AIDS¹⁸.

Therefore, the present work identified the necessity to improve preventive campaigns by properly planned and directed to specific publics considering the regional peculiarities, gender and age group of people. Additionally, the majority of young people studied have a good knowledge about general aspects and non-sexual transmission related to HIV/AIDS, but on the other hand, they don't think to be vulnerable to the virus. So this is a very important aspect to be discussed in future campaigns in order to make it more efficient and to achieve all the proposed objectives.

References

1. Santos NSO, Romanos MTV, Wigg MD. Introdução à Virologia Humana. Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara Koogan; 2002.
2. Oliveira SHS, Dias MR, Silva MIT. Adolescentes e AIDS: Fatores que influenciam a intenção de uso do preservativo. DST – J bras. Doenças Sex. Trans 2005; 17(1):32-38.
3. UNAIDS. Report on the global AIDS epidemic. Status of the global HIV epidemic. 2008.
4. Fernandes JCL, Coutinho ESF, Matida A. Conhecimentos e atitudes relativas a SIDA/AIDS em uma população de favela do Rio de Janeiro. Cad. Saúde Pública 1992; 8(2):176-182.
5. DATASUS. Date of Unic System of Health. Informações de Saúde. Brazil. 2005. Available at: <http://tabnet.datasus.gov.br/cgi/tabcgi.exe?ibge/cnv/popBA.def>.
6. Praça NS, Latorre MRDO. Saúde sexual e reprodutiva com enfoque na transmissão do HIV: práticas de puérperas atendidas em maternidades filantrópicas do município de São Paulo. Rev. Bras. Saúde Mater. Infant. 2003; 3(1):61-74.
7. Praça NS, Latorre MRDO, Hearst N. Fatores associados à percepção de risco de infecção pelo HIV por puérperas internadas. Rev. Saúde Pública 2003; 37(5):543-551.
8. Silva WA, Buchalla CM, Paiva V, Latorre MRDO, Stall R, Hearst N. Prevenção de doenças sexualmente transmissíveis e Aids entre jogadores juniores. Rev. Saúde Pública 2002; 36 (4):68-75.
9. Paiva V, Pupo LR, Barboza R. O direito à prevenção e os desafios da redução da vulnerabilidade ao HIV no Brasil. Rev. Saúde Pública 2006; 40:109-119.
10. Antunes MC, Peres CA, Paiva V, Stall R, Hearst N. Diferenças na prevenção da Aids entre homens e mulheres jovens de escolas públicas em São Paulo, SP. Rev. Saúde Pública 2002; 36 (4):88-95.
11. Villarinho L, Bezerra I, Lacerda R, Latorre MRDO, Paiva V, Stall R et al. Caminhoneiros de rota curta e sua vulnerabilidade ao HIV, Santos, SP. Rev. Saúde Pública 2002; 36(4):61-67.
12. Boletim Epidemiológico AIDS. Coordenação Nacional DST e AIDS. Brasília (DF); Ministério da Saúde do Brasil, 2005.
13. Coordenação Municipal de DST/AIDS. Secretária Municipal de Saúde de Itabuna-Ba. Dados Epidemiológicos: Jan/05-Mar/06. Itabuna /Ba.
14. Fernandes JCL. Evolução dos conhecimentos, atitudes e práticas relativas ao HIV/Aids em uma população de favela do Rio de Janeiro. Cad. Saúde Pública 1998; 14(3): 575-581.
15. Szwarcwald CL, Júnior AB, Pascom AR, Júnior PR. Pesquisa de conhecimentos, atitudes e práticas na população brasileira de 15 a 54 anos, 2004. In: Boletim Epidemiológico AIDS e DST. Ministério da Saúde do Brasil. Brasília (DF); 2004(1).
16. Portela, Margareth Crisóstomo and Lotrowska, Michel. Assistência aos pacientes com HIV/Aids no Brasil. Rev. Saúde Pública 2006; 40:70-79.
17. Silveira MF, Santos IS. Impacto de intervenções no uso de preservativos em portadores do HIV. Rev. Saúde Pública 2005; 39(2):296-304.
18. Terry PE, Mhloyi M, Masvaure T, Adlis S. An examination of knowledge, attitudes and practices related to HIV/AIDS prevention in Zimbabwean university students: Comparing intervention program participants and non-participants. Intern. J. Infect. Diseases. 2006, 10(1): 38-46.

Author Information

Sócrates B. Matos

Researcher, Biological Sciences Department State University of Santa Cruz & Federal University of Bahia Salvador – Bahia – Brazil

Ana Paula S. Ramos, MSc

Research Fellow, Biological Sciences Department State University of Santa Cruz

Stéffanne C. S. Lima

Student, Biological Sciences Department State University of Santa Cruz

Kleitton S. Borges

Researcher Fellow, Biological Sciences Department State University of Santa Cruz

Verônica C. R. Pacheco

Research Fellow, Biological Sciences Department State University of Santa Cruz

Marcos L. Moreli

Associate Professor, Biological Sciences Department State University of Santa Cruz