

**A STUDY ON AWARENESS ABOUT HIV/AIDS AMONG FIRST YEAR MEDICAL STUDENTS OF BANGALORE MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE**Shivaraj B. M<sup>1</sup>, Chandrashekar M<sup>2</sup>, Ranganath T. S<sup>3</sup>**HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:**

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**ABSTRACT: INTRODUCTION:** HIV/AIDS epidemic is one of the challenges in public health in India. Young people are more vulnerable for getting in contact with the disease. Medical students during their tenure of student life can play a pivotal role in knowledge transmission about the disease to the general public. This study was conducted at Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute to find out the awareness of HIV/AIDS among first year medical students. **METHODOLOGY:** A Cross sectional study was done among 250 MBBS students of Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute during the academic year of 2012-2013. The information was collected from them within 2-3 weeks of admission to the course using pre-tested semi structured questionnaire. **RESULTS:** The mean age of the study population was 18(+ 1) years. Males comprised 64% and females comprised 36% of respondents. 29% of them were from rural background and 67% from Urban. 97% of the participants know that HIV causative agent is virus. 49% of them said it is contagious, 42% of them said non-contagious and 8.9% say they don't know. They had adequate knowledge about modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS was through blood transfusion, unsterilized instrument, and mother to child transmission. But regarding sexual transmission among two HIV infected person, 40% of them said it is safe. 92% of them felt HIV can be prevented by taking proper precautions. 94% of them got the information from mass media especially from TV. 55% of them received formal sex education in Schools and Colleges. **CONCLUSION:** Young medical students can be used as a resource persons for educating the youth at the community level.

**KEYWORDS:** HIV, AIDS, Medical students.

**INTRODUCTION:** The HIV/AIDS epidemic represents the most serious public health problem in India.<sup>1</sup> The epidemic of HIV/AIDS is now progressing at a rapid pace among young people. Studies have reported that Young people form a significance segment of those attending sexually transmitted infection clinic & those infected by HIV. India presently has 2-3.6 million cases of HIV/AIDS and is the second country after South Africa. AIDS is affecting many people in sexually active age group.<sup>2</sup> Majority of the HIV infections are in the age group of 15-44 yrs, out of which 35% are in the age of 15-24yrs.<sup>3</sup> Medical students are more vulnerable to infectious diseases as they are in direct contact with the patients, they deal with blood transfusions, injections etc.,<sup>4</sup> A sound basis of knowledge about HIV infection and AIDS is essential to allow students to develop as doctors who undertake appropriate measures during clinical practice.<sup>5</sup> (In addition, it is also likely that possessing appropriate information may instil confidence in young doctor's ability to diagnose and then manage patients infected by HIV.<sup>6</sup> In the present study an attempt was made to study the level of awareness among first year MBBS students admitted to Bangalore Medical College and Research Institute in the academic year 2012-13.

**OBJECTIVES:** To study the awareness and knowledge about HIV/AIDS among the first year MBBS students.

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**METHODS:** Methodology: A Cross sectional study was done among 250 students. The information was collected from them within 2-3weeks of admission using pre-tested semi structured questionnaire. Out of 250 students 202 students have returned the completed questionnaires. Statistical analysis: Descriptive statistics.

**RESULTS:** The mean age of the study population was 18(+1) years. Males comprised 64% and females comprised 36% of respondents. 29% of them were from rural background and 67% from Urban. 97% of the participants know that HIV causative agent is virus. 49% of them said it is contagious, 42% of them said non-contagious and 8.9% say they don't know. They had adequate knowledge about modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS was through blood transfusion, unsterilized instrument, and mother to child transmission. But regarding sexual transmission among two HIV infected person, 40% of them said it is safe. 92% of them felt HIV can be prevented by taking proper precautions. 94% of them got the information from mass media especially from TV. 55% of them received formal sex education in Schools and Colleges. This study has the same findings as of study conducted by Basavaraj G S.<sup>7,8</sup>

SL. NO.	MODES OF TRANSMISSION	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	Blood Transfusion	97%	1%	2%
2	Unsterile needles	95.5%	1.5%	1.5%
3	Sexual route	96%	2%	2%
4	Shaving with same blades and needles	81%	12.9%	6%
5	Tattooing	43%	32%	25%

Table 1: Awareness on Modes of Transmission of HIV/AIDS

SL.NO.	MODE	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
1	Heterosexual	81.2%	3%	15.8%
2	Homosexual	50.5%	20.3%	29%

Table 2: Awareness on Modes of Sexual Transmission

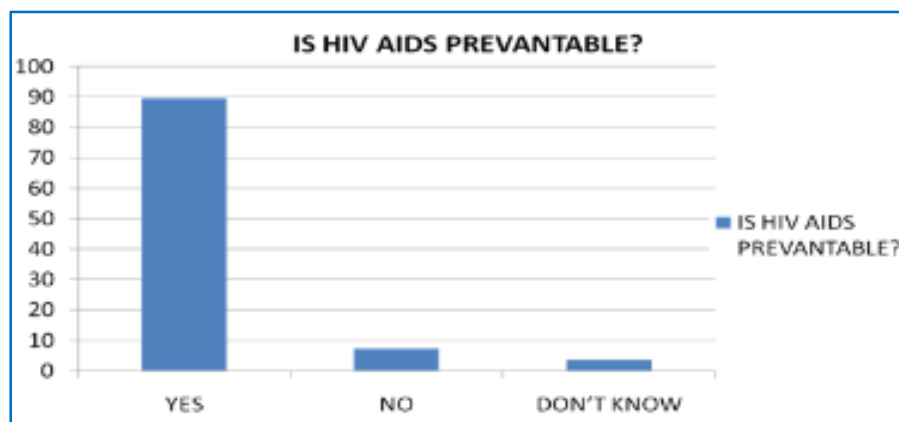


Fig. 1

Mother to child transmission			
Mother to child during	Yes	No	Don't know
Pregnancy	66%	25%	9%
Delivery	66%	18%	16%
Breast feeding	64%	24%	12%

Fig. 2

Sl. No.	Misconceptions	Yes	No	Don't know
1	Hugging/Kissing	4	92	4
2	Sharing of plates/glasses	1.5	95	3.5
3	Sharing of towels	3	93.5	3.5
4	Toilet seats	4	87.8	8.2
5	Urine	6.4	72.8	20.8
6	Haircut	13.4	76.2	10.4
7	Mosquito bite	81.7	12.9	6.4
8	Wearing same cloths	9.9	83.7	6.4

Table 3: Misconception about modes of transmission

**DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS:** People living with HIV in India often experience discrimination during their visit to health care centers. Inadequate knowledge and fear of HIV infected people have been identified as a serious problem among health care professionals. Compared to paramedic's generally medical students are more aware about HIV/AIDS and its transmission. This is rightly reflected in our study, as their knowledge levels are good. There was no knowledge gap between rural and urban students. They have some misconceptions about the disease transmission which can be rectified with their subsequent exposure to medical teaching in the college and hospital.

Formal sex education should be made available at the school and pre degree course curriculum levels so that they can get more awareness about the disease. Young medical students can be used as a resource persons for educating the youth at the community level. This will promote an ideal delivery of accurate information on HIV/AIDS and its management to the public and health care personnel.

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