

## AWARENESS OF HIV IN THE LATE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS IN RURAL AREA OF DEOLI BLOCK, WARDHA DISTRICT, MAHARASHTRA

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### ARTICLE INFO

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** HIV prevalence continues to be high among vulnerable groups. Physical, psychological, and social attributes of adolescence make young people particularly vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

**Objectives:** 1) To determine awareness about HIV among the adolescent age students. 2) To assess the interpretation regarding the signs and symptoms and mode of transmission.

**Method:** A cross sectional study on Late adolescent college going students both males and females in a Junior College in Deoli block of Wardha district where 200 students were interviewed (Male: 117, Female: 83) by a pre-designed, pre-tested anonymous, self administered questionnaire was filled by 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> standard students after obtaining necessary permission from the school authority and consent was taken from the adolescent students.

**Result:** 100% students were aware about HIV/AIDS. TV was the main source of information. Male students were found to have better knowledge regarding transmission and prevention of AIDS than female students. Decrease in misconceptions and an increase in knowledge occurred about various modes of transmission of HIV& its prevention.

**Conclusion:** The present study highlights that most of them are aware of HIV/AIDS. TV and Internet plays a significant role in knowledge about HIV among adolescents.

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### INTRODUCTION

In India, 35% of all reported AIDS cases are among the age group of 15-24 years, indicating the vulnerability of the younger population to the epidemic <sup>1</sup>. Moreover, many youth are socially inexperienced and dependent on others. HIV affects the immune system and reduces the body's defenses to protect against various infectious diseases and cancer <sup>2</sup>. HIV prevalence continues to be high among vulnerable groups. Physical, psychological, and social attributes of adolescence make young people particularly vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. Societies often compound young people's risk by making it difficult for them to learn about HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. As compared to the developed countries, adolescents in India are less aware about the reproductive health education. Hence this study was conducted with the purpose to evaluate awareness level of the adolescents residing in rural area in Wardha district in Central India.

### METHODOLOGY

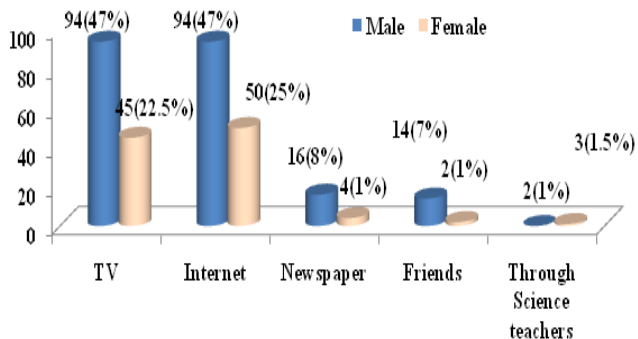
The study design was a cross sectional. Study population were 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, standard College going students

both males (117) and females (83). The study was conducted in the month of October 2014. Study site was a Junior College, Taluka Deoli, Wardha District, in Maharashtra. Inclusion criteria included all the Junior college students of standard 11 and 12 who were willing to participate in the study were distributed a Pre-Designed, Pre-tested Questionnaire, it was filled and permission from the school authority was obtained. Exclusion criteria included those students who were not willing to participate. Informed consent was obtained from each respondent prior to the interview. In all 206 students participated in the study, 6 students opted out of the study so the sample size of 200 was chosen (M: 117, F: 83). Analysis was done in the Microsoft Excel and SPSS 17.

### RESULTS

**Figure 1: Source of information about HIV for the students (Multiple Responses)**

**Figure 1** show most of the source of information about HIV came from Internet 72%, Television 69.5%, followed by Newspaper 9%, Science teachers and 2.5%. Friends 1%



**Table 1: Determinants of HIV according to the responses from the students (Multiple Responses)**

Characteristics	Male (n=117)	Female (n=83)	Total (n=200)
<b>Signs and symptoms of HIV</b>			
Fever	106(53%)	67(33.5%)	173 (86.5%)
Weight Loss	43(21.5%)	8(4%)	51 (25.5%)
Chronic Cough	20(10%)	17(8.5%)	37 (18.5%)
Chronic Diarrhea	27(13.5%)	4(2%)	31 (15.5%)
<b>Most common type of sexual act that carries high risk of HIV transmission</b>			
Anal	107(53%)	79(39%)	186 (92%)
Vaginal	79(39%)	17(8.5%)	96 (47.5%)
Oral	26(13%)	3(1.55)	29 (14.5%)
<b>Mode of transmission of HIV</b>			
Infected Needles	45(22%)	13(6%)	58 (28%)
Unsafe-Sex	102(51%)	48(24%)	150 (75%)
Mother to child	4(2%)	1(0.5%)	5 (2.5%)
Kissing	27(13%)	4(2%)	31 (15%)
Mosquitoes Bite	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sharing food	23(11%)	2(1%)	25 (12%)
Sharing Toilets	25(12.5%)	4(2%)	29 (14.5%)

**Table 1** revealed that the signs and symptoms of HIV as told by the students were Fever (86.5%) followed by weight loss (25.5%), chronic cough (18.5%) and chronic diarrhea (15.5%). Most common high risk transmission of HIV was by Anal followed by Vaginal and Oral. Response regarding mode of transmission of HIV was Unsafe sex (75%) followed by Infected needles (29%), Sharing toilets (14.5%), Kissing (15%) and Sharing food (12%).

**DISCUSSION**

Most of the students in the present study answered “Fever” (86.5%) as commonest symptom followed by weight loss (25.5%), chronic cough (18.5%) and diarrhea (15.5%) in HIV. Anal sex as the most common act of sex carried the highest risk of HIV transmission was revealed by the students. Unsafe sex as the commonest mode of transmission of HIV was responded by most of the students. In a study by **Shrotri A et. al**, similar findings were observed, 53% of women were able to mention at least one method of prevention from HIV <sup>3</sup>.

Most common source of information about HIV for the students were TV, Internet, very less information was shared by the science teachers. In a study by **Srivastava A et. al**, 100% students had heard about HIV/AIDS. 59.5% students had heard about HIV/AIDS from television while

46.9% mentioned radio as main source of information to them <sup>4</sup>. In the present study it was revealed infected needles (29%), unsafe sex (75%), mother to child (2.5%), were observed as one of the causes of HIV spread. misconception regarding spread of HIV exist i.e. kissing (15%), mosquito bites (0%), sharing toilets (14.5%) and sharing foods (12%) can lead to spread of the HIV. In a study by **Borkar A et. al**, transmission takes place through sneezing/coughing of infected person; 29.08% thought that HIV could be transmitted by a mosquito bite (15%). HIV transmission takes place by living with an HIV-infected person was believed by 14% and 14.74% thought that HIV can be acquired through eating food with HIV positive individual <sup>5</sup>. **Chakraborty S et. al**, also observed similar findings of misconception regarding HIV spread <sup>6</sup>.

**CONCLUSION**

Awareness about HIV was good in the rural adolescent students. Newer sources like internet have been utilized more than any other means by the students. Misconceptions still exist among the adolescent age group students.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Government and similar organizations should take steps to increase awareness among the adolescent students in the rural areas and remove existing misconceptions regarding the transmission of HIV/ AIDS. IEC activities can be carried out to eradicate misconceptions and improve the knowledge about HIV.

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