

A Study On The Awareness Of Hiv And Aids Among The High School Students Of Four Schools Of Lakhimpur District In Assam.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to find out the level of awareness on HIV and AIDS of adolescents studying in Class IX and X of Lakhimpur district in Assam. A sample of 300 adolescent students were taken. A questionnaire to test their knowledge on HIV and AIDS was developed and standardized by the researcher for the purpose. Results for the study were calculated using mean, standard deviation and t-test. Results indicated that the adolescent students showed a mean score of 56.6% awareness regarding HIV and AIDS. Private school adolescents were found to have higher awareness than government school adolescents. No significant difference was found between the male and female adolescent students.

Key Words: HIV, AIDS, Adolescents, High School students, Male students, Female students, Government school students, Private school students.

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INTRODUCTION

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome) is a disease caused by a virus called HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). The illness alters the immune system making people much more vulnerable to infections and diseases. This susceptibility worsens as the disease progresses. HIV is found in the body fluids of an infected person (semen and vaginal fluids, blood and breast milk). The virus is passed from one person to another through blood-to-blood and sexual contact. In addition, infected pregnant women can pass HIV to their babies during pregnancy, delivering the baby during child-birth and through breast feeding. Thus HIV can be transmitted in many ways, such as sexual contact, blood transfusion and contaminated hypodermic needles. There are many misconceptions about HIV and AIDS. So it should be made clear that the virus CANNOT be transmitted through shaking hands, hugging, casual kissing, sneezing, touching unbroken skin, using the same toilet, sharing

towels, sharing cutlery, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or other forms of 'casual contact'.

Many a times people confuse HIV and AIDS as one and the same thing but it is not so. HIV is the virus which attacks the T-cells in the immune system and AIDS is the syndrome or medical condition which appears in advanced stages of HIV infection.

The above discussion gives a clear concept of what AIDS is. Adolescents today face a high risk of contracting AIDS. Present figures worldwide suggest there are 10.3 million HIV +ve adolescents whose age range is from 15 to 24 (Naswa and Marfatia, 2010). According to the African Population Health Research Center (2009), adolescence is an important period in human development where a person reaches sexual maturity, manifest in sexual engagement; thus encountering the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. Thus adolescents are prone to AIDS if they don't have adequate knowledge on how to stay away from it.

Sometimes small mistakes due to ignorance such as using a contaminated syringe etc. can lead to fatal results. So to avoid these kind of seemingly small but fatal incidents from happening, it is very much needed that these adolescents have adequate awareness on AIDS, what it is, how it is transmitted etc. Adequate awareness on the part of people regarding HIV and AIDS can go a long way in preventing AIDS and also help to eliminate many negative attitudes towards HIV positive people and people living with AIDS. So it is vital that their awareness of the risks associated with sexual behaviour is made clear, and the importance of applying this knowledge to real life experience (Njogu and Martin, 2003; Macintyre et al., 2004).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A Study on the Awareness of HIV and AIDS among the High School Students of Four Schools of Lakhimpur District in Assam.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The researcher has gone through some studies done on HIV/AIDS, a few of which are cited as follows:

1. Bansal, R.K. (1992) studied the vulnerability of adolescent truck cleaners in relation to HIV and AIDS transmission and concluded that most of them indulged in unprotected sexual intercourse and so were highly susceptible to the contraction and transmission of HIV/AIDS.
2. Ghosh, S., Chowdhury, S., and Gill, J.S. (1997) in their study with the objectives like knowledge, attitudes and behaviour of both men and women slum dwellers regarding HIV/AIDS/STDs, and identification of the prevalence of high risk sexual practices found that knowledge about HIV, AIDS and STDs was poor among the slum dwellers and the prevalence of high risk sexual practice was high.
3. Kumar, A. Lal, P., Ingle, G.K., and Gulati, N. (1997), found that students showed a general

awareness of how HIV is transmitted without recording a significant difference between the awareness of the two genders.

4. Pratiha Gupta, Fatima Anjum, J.P. Srivastava and Zeashan Haider Zaidi (2013) in their study on Knowledge about HIV/AIDS among Secondary School Students observed that their knowledge was quite satisfactory for most of the variables like mode of transmission, including mother to child transmission of the disease.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the level of awareness regarding HIV and AIDS of the adolescent students.
2. To find out the difference in HIV/AIDS awareness score between the Private High School students and the Government High School students
3. To find out the difference in HIV/AIDS awareness score between the Male High School students and the Female High School students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will be significant in a number of ways such as:

- i. It will help us to know whether these adolescent students are aware and to what extent about HIV and AIDS.
- ii. The findings of this study will be of use to curriculum planners of High School course concerning whether any changes are to be made in its programmes to make the HIV/AIDS awareness level more, in case it is low.
- iii. This study will also highlight the difference, if any, in the HIV/AIDS awareness of the students in relation to gender or their being educated in government or privately run schools and on its basis the HIV/AIDS awareness programmes in schools can be evaluated and modified.
- iv. This study can also serve as a base for comparison of the HIV/AIDS awareness of high-school students of other districts.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study was delimited to:

1. Lakhimpur district of Assam.
2. Class IX and X students of two Government and two private schools of Lakhimpur district
3. Variables: male students, female students, government school students and private school students.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference in HIV/AIDS awareness score between the Private High School students and the Government High School students .
2. There is no significant difference in HIV/AIDS awareness score between the male High School students and the female High School students .

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- i. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus which attacks the T-cells in the immune system
- ii. AIDS - AIDS(Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome or Acquired Immuno deficiency Syndrome) is the syndrome or medical condition which appears in advanced stages of HIV infection.
- iii. Awareness-insight into; knowledge.
- iv. High-school students –(here) the students of Class IX and X in the 2014-15 academic session in Lakhimpur district of Assam.
- v. Gender – one's being male or female.
- vi. Adolescents – persons in the age group 13 to 18 years, here, the students of Class IX and X in the 2019-2020 academic

session in Lakhimpur district of Assam.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY:**a)METHODOLOGY**

Since the aim of this study was to obtain precise information concerning the current level of awareness on HIV and AIDS from the present sample of students , the descriptive research method was found to be the best suited method for this study

b)TOOLS USED

A questionnaire on HIV and AIDS related awareness for the high school students was developed and standardized by the investigator to find out their awareness scores on HIV and AIDS.

c)SAMPLE

300 Class IX and X students of two Government and two private schools of Lakhimpur district formed the sample for this study. The sample was selected using the quota sample and disproportionate stratified random sampling technique.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

For analysis of the data, the data was first collected from the students with the help of the tool. The scores were then calculated (according to the norms set in the tool), for each sample, which represented his/her HIV/AIDS awareness. The scores, thus obtained ,were then tabulated. The mean scores and standard deviation were calculated for each variable and then the statistical measure of t-test was utilized to find out whether significant differences between the variables exist or not and thus the hypotheses formulated were tested. That means the statistical measures of mean, standard deviation and t-test were utilized for analysing the study.

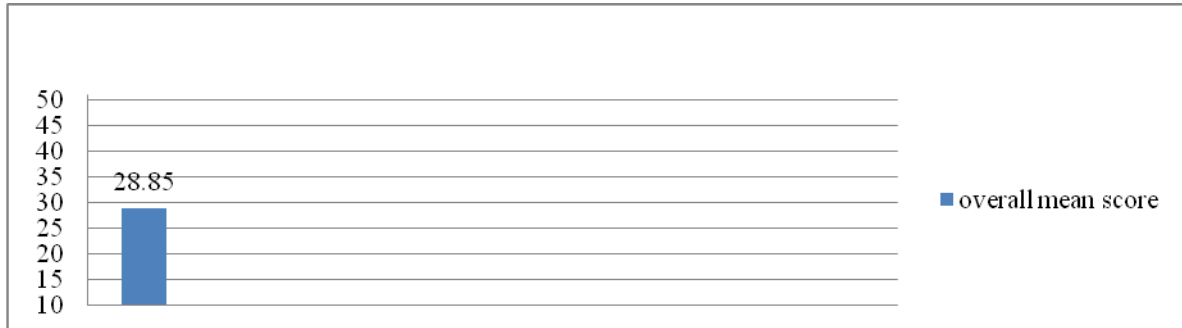
The results of the study are shown with the help of the tables and graphs as follows:

TABLE 1

OVERALL MEAN SCORE OF HIV/AIDS AWARENESS AMONG THE ADOLESCENT STUDENTS:

Total students	Mean score	Total Score
300	28.85	51

A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE STUDENTS’ MEAN SCORES IN THE POPULATION EDUCATION AWARENESS SCALE. (out of a total score of 51)



RESULT 1: From the table it can be interpreted that 28.85 out of 51 (i.e 56.6%) is the overall mean score in the HIV/AIDS awareness scale which can be said to be a very mediocre score and not at all high.

TABLE -2

COMPARISON OF MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE AIDS AWARENESS QUESTIONAIRRE.

	TOTAL(N)	MEAN	S.D.	df	t-value	REMARK
GOVT. SCHOOL STUDENTS	100	27.8	4.42			
				198	3.32	SIGNIFICANT AT THE 0.05 LEVEL
PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS	100	30.2	5.71			

A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION SHOWING THE DIFFERENCE IN THE MEANS OF GOVERNMENT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE HIV/AIDS AWARENESS QUESTIONAIRRE



RESULT 2

It is seen that the computed t-value (3.32) is more than the critical t-value at 0.05 level (1.97). So the first null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in AIDS awareness score between Private High School students and Government High School students stands rejected.

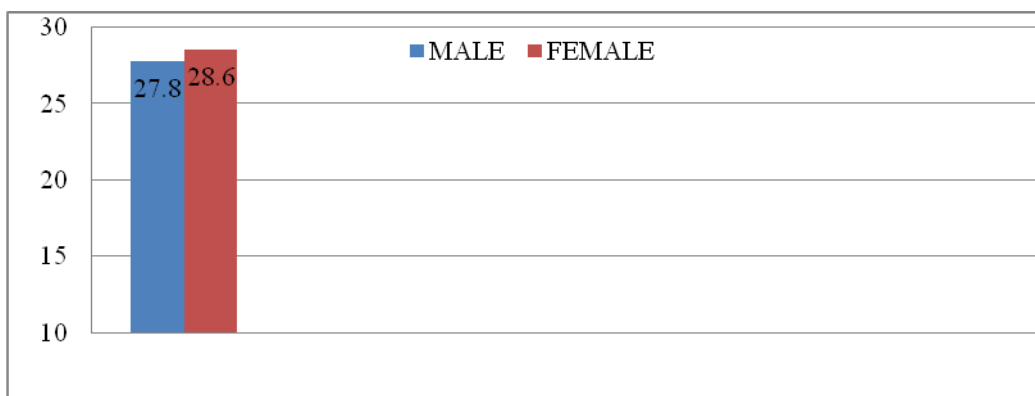
Significant difference is found in the awareness score between Private School students and Government School students. The mean score of the private school students is higher than that of the government school students.

TABLE -3

COMPARISON OF MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION BETWEEN MALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE HIV/AIDS AWARENESS QUESTIONAIRRE

	TOTAL(N)	MEAN	S.D.	df	t-value	REMARK
MALE	100	27.8	4.42	198	1.19	NOT SIGNIFICANT AT THE 0.05 LEVEL
FEMALE	100	28.6	5.08			

A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION COMPARING MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS' MEAN SCORES' IN THE HIV/AIDS AWARENESS QUESTIONAIRRE



RESULT -3

The computed t-value (1.19) is lesser than the critical t-value at 0.05 level (1.97). So the second null hypothesis formulated for the study that there is no significant difference in

HIV/AIDS awareness score between male High School students and female High School students is accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study threw light on the awareness of the adolescent students regarding HIV and AIDS. The findings indicated that no significant difference exist in the awareness of male and female students regarding HIV and AIDS but significant differences were found between government school students and private school students. So it is necessary to take steps for creating greater awareness among the government school adolescents since they showed low awareness than their non-tribal and private school attending counterparts. The mean awareness score of all the students taken together is 28.85 (on a total score of 51) which is equivalent to 56.6% which can be considered as mediocre awareness, so more awareness programmes are to be conducted among the high school students in Lakhimpur district so that these adolescents gain high awareness and knowledge on HIV and AIDS. Only then we can move towards an AIDS-free world. However while generalizing the results of this study, it is necessary to consider the sample size. Some other variables might have played their part to some extent for the findings of this study. So further studies need to be conducted with larger samples and with different groups of students and with different variables to confirm the above findings.

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