

Attitude of College Students towards Voluntary HIV/AIDS Testing

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this research was to investigate the attitude of college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing. The data were collected on 200 (100 male and 100 female) college students by employing purposive sampling technique. To collect the requisite data for present study the investigator used an attitude scale towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing developed by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand. In order to study the objectives of the present study, the investigator used the statistical technique of t-test. The outcome of the research investigation revealed that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female, arts and science, boys science and boys arts, boys science and girls science and boys arts and girls arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing. Further, the study also concluded that there is significant difference in the attitude of girls science and girls arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Keywords: Voluntary testing, HIV/AIDS, college students

HIV/AIDS is a silent, symptomless infection caused by a virus—the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) — that could enter the body during unprotected sexual encounters, through blood transfusions, infected needles or from mother to child. HIV positive denotes the presence in the infected person's body of the HIV virus (Ramasubban and Rishyasringa, 2010). AIDS-Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is a condition in which the in-built defence systems of the body break down completely. This phenomenon is gradual, but ultimately leads to total depletion of a very important cell component of the immune mechanism (Pavri, 1996). Today, Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has become a security crisis. This is because HIV infection has a profound impact on infant, child and maternal mortality, life expectancy as well as economic growth (Sheth, 2003). Voluntary counselling and testing (VCT) is the process by which an individual undergoes counselling, enabling him or her to

make an informed choice about being tested for HIV. In recent years, voluntary HIV testing, in combination with pre- and post-test counselling, has become increasingly important in national and international prevention and care efforts. *Voluntary* means that the decision to go for the test is entirely your own choice. The government is encouraging all of us to come forward to be tested for HIV. It believes that if many of us get tested, even though we may not be sick, this will help to lessen the amount of stigma associated with the HIV test. Abebe and Mitikie (2010) undertook a study on a topic entitled 'Perception of High School Students towards Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing, using Health Belief Model in Butajira, SNNPR' and found that about ninety seven percent of the students had heard about Voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services but less than one fifth of them had undergone VCT. Eighty two percent of the students were willing to undergo VCT. It was shown that willingness to VCT was significantly associated

with perceived susceptibility [AOR=0.37(0.28, 0.89)], perceived barrier [AOR= 0.45 (0.23, 0.89)] and perceived benefit [AOR=1.79 (1.44, 2.49)]. The majority of students had heard about VCT and revealed willingness to undergo VCT. High perceived susceptibility and barriers were associated with low willingness to undergo VCT. On the other hand, students with high perceived benefits showed better willingness to undergo VCT. Gatta, and Thupayagale (2012) in their study 'Knowledge of, and attitudes towards, Voluntary HIV Counselling and Testing services amongst adolescent high school students in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia' revealed that 75.7% of students are aware of the voluntary HIV counselling and testing services; 62.2% use the services and suggested that VHCT services should be located in schools and youth clubs for better access by adolescents. Thirty-two percent of respondents rated themselves at risk of HIV infection and 35.2% were not willing to disclose their HIV positive status to anybody.

The findings of the study clearly indicate a need for a more accessible voluntary HIV counselling and testing services for adolescents. Fikadie, Bedimo and Alamrew (2014) undertook a study on a topic entitled 'Prevalence of voluntary counseling and testing utilization and its associated factors among Bahirdar University students' and found that from all respondents 37.8% of the study participants had undergone HIV test. Different variables showed significant association with VCT uptake.

About three-fourths of the respondents had comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The purpose of this study is to describe and to compare the college students' attitudes (knowledge, feelings and behaviour) towards HIV/AIDS (Human Immune Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) voluntary testing. The area of study has been selected due to rapid spread of HIV/AIDS in the recent past. The AIDS education around the world is critical to preventing the spread of HIV. There are an estimated 34 million people living with the virus, and each year millions more people become infected. Effective HIV and AIDS education can help prevent new infections by providing people with information about HIV and how it is passed on, and in doing so equip individuals with the knowledge to protect themselves from becoming infected with the virus. Further, it is also necessary

that how much the youth are ready to deal with this problem and ready to participate in preventing this problem. Hence, the investigator decided to take the present problem for the study.

Objectives of the Study

The present study has been conducted keeping in mind the following objectives like:

1. To compare male and female college students with respect to their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
2. To compare arts and science college students with respect to their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
3. To compare boys science and boys arts college students with respect to their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
4. To compare girls science and girls arts college students with respect to their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
5. To compare boys science and girls science college students with respect to their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
6. To compare boys arts and girls arts college students with respect to their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses formulated and tested in the present study were as follows:

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
2. There is no significant difference in the attitude of arts and science college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of boys science and boys arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
4. There is no significant difference in the attitude of girls science and girls arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
5. There is no significant difference in the attitude of boys science and girls science

college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

- There is no significant difference in the attitude of boys arts and girls arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

METHOD

In order to accomplish the objectives of the present investigation the researcher has used the survey method of descriptive research.

Sample

In the present study, a sample of 200 (100 boys and 100 girls) college students was drawn from the East district of Sikkim. Due to paucity of time and limited scope of the study, the sampled students were selected purposively keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

Tool Used

To collect the requisite data for present study the investigator used an attitude scale towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing developed by Vishal Sood and Arti Anand. This scale contains 48 (26 were of positive type and remaining 22 items and with serial no. 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 45 and 48 were of negative type) statements.

Statistical Techniques Used

To compare the mean scores on the attitude of college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing with respect to their gender and stream, the technique of t-test was used.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

It is evident from the above table 1 that the science and arts girl college students differ significantly on their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing. Further, the differences between male & female; arts & science; boys science & boys arts; boys science & girls science and boys arts & girls arts are found to be not significant. Hence, these groups do not differ significantly on their attitude towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Findings of the Study

After careful analysis of the obtained data and interpretation of the results with regard to the objectives and hypotheses of the study, the investigator reached at the following findings:

- There is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
- There is no significant difference in the attitude of arts and science college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Table 1: Mean, SD, and T-value of the Differences in Scores between Different Groups of College Students on Attitude towards Voluntary HIV/Aids Testing

Groups	N	Mean	σ	SE _D	df	't'	Remarks
Male	100	176.50	15.62	1.56			Not Significant
Female	100	175.51	12.73	2.27	198	0.49	
Arts	50	174.58	13.68	1.37			Not Significant
Science	50	177.41	14.75	1.48	98	1.41	
Boys Science	50	176.72	16.99	2.40			Not Significant
Boys Arts	50	176.18	14.36	2.03	98	0.17	
Girls Science	50	178.10	12.25	1.73			Significant at 0.05 level
Girls Arts	50	172.98	12.91	1.82	98	2.03	
Boys Science	50	176.72	16.99	2.40			Not Significant
Girls Science	50	178.10	12.25	1.73	98	0.47	
Boys Arts	50	176.18	14.36	2.03			Not Significant
Girls Arts	50	172.98	12.91	1.82	98	1.17	

3. There is no significant difference in the attitude of boys science and boys arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
4. There is significant difference in the attitude of girls science and girls arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
5. There is no significant difference in the attitude of boys science and girls science college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
6. There is no significant difference in the attitude of boys arts and girls arts college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.

Educational Implications

The following are the educational implications of the present study:

- ♦ Orientation programmes for all college students should be organized for developing the attitude of college students towards voluntary HIV/AIDS testing.
- ♦ The teachers and parents should motivate the students to get up to date knowledge of HIV/AIDS and how to prevent ourselves from this.
- ♦ Time to time doctors or counsellors should be invited in the college for making the students familiar about this disease.

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