

A PRE EXPERIMENTAL STUDY TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING PROGRAM ON KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF ADOLESCENTS REGARDING HIV/AIDS TRANSMISSION AND ITS PREVENTION IN SELECTED SCHOOLS, PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

HIV/AIDS remains a significant public health challenge worldwide, particularly among adolescents who are often vulnerable due to lack of adequate knowledge and misconceptions. This pre-experimental study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a targeted training program designed to enhance knowledge and improve attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention among adolescents in selected schools in Punjab. The study employs a one-group pre-test and post-test design to assess the impact of the training intervention.

KEYWORDS: HIV/AIDS, Adolescents, Training Program, Knowledge Improvement, Attitude Change.

INTRODUCTION

The HIV/AIDS epidemic remains a pressing public health challenge globally, with its impact particularly acute among vulnerable populations such as adolescents. Adolescents, characterized by their developmental stage of increased risk-taking and curiosity, often find themselves at the crossroads of both misinformation and inadequate education about HIV/AIDS. In the context of Punjab, a region with its own unique socio-cultural dynamics, there is a pressing need to address the gaps in knowledge and attitudes surrounding HIV/AIDS to foster effective prevention and management strategies. This introduction aims to underscore the significance of HIV/AIDS education for adolescents, highlight the current gaps in their understanding, and present the rationale for implementing and evaluating a targeted training program designed to enhance knowledge and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic, caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which leads to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), has had a profound global impact since its emergence in the late 20th century. Despite significant advances in medical research, treatment, and prevention, the stigma and misconceptions surrounding HIV/AIDS continue to hinder effective prevention efforts. Adolescents, who are often still developing their understanding of sexual health and risk behaviors, are particularly vulnerable to the negative consequences of these

misconceptions. In many regions, including Punjab, adolescents often lack comprehensive education about HIV/AIDS, leading to misconceptions and risky behaviors that exacerbate the spread of the virus.

In Punjab, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS has been a concern, though it is relatively lower compared to some other regions. However, the risk of transmission remains significant, particularly among adolescents who may engage in risky behaviors such as unprotected sex or drug use. The lack of accurate knowledge and understanding about HIV transmission and prevention methods among this age group poses a serious challenge to public health efforts. Misconceptions about the virus, its transmission routes, and effective prevention strategies often contribute to increased vulnerability and stigmatization, further complicating efforts to control the epidemic.

Educational interventions have proven effective in various settings for improving knowledge and attitudes related to HIV/AIDS. These interventions aim to provide adolescents with accurate information, challenge existing myths, and promote safer behaviors. Comprehensive sexual education programs that include information on HIV/AIDS transmission, prevention, and treatment have been shown to improve knowledge and reduce risky behaviors among young people. However, there is a need to tailor these programs to the specific cultural and social contexts of the target population to enhance their effectiveness.

The present study focuses on a pre-experimental evaluation of a training program designed to improve the knowledge and attitudes of adolescents regarding HIV/AIDS in selected schools in Punjab. The program aims to address the specific educational needs of this demographic by providing interactive and engaging learning experiences. The training includes workshops, multimedia presentations, and role-playing activities to ensure that participants not only acquire factual knowledge but also develop a more positive and informed attitude towards HIV/AIDS. The effectiveness of the program will be assessed through a comparison of pre-test and post-test results, evaluating changes in knowledge and attitudes over time.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights into the effectiveness of school-based HIV/AIDS education programs. By focusing on adolescents in Punjab, the research aims to address a critical gap in the literature and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving HIV/AIDS education in similar settings. The findings could inform the development of more effective educational strategies and interventions tailored to the needs of young people, ultimately contributing to better health outcomes and reduced transmission rates.

In addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving knowledge and attitudes among adolescents. The training program evaluated in this study represents a crucial step towards enhancing HIV/AIDS education and prevention efforts in Punjab. By focusing on the specific needs of adolescents and employing a comprehensive educational approach, the program aims to make a meaningful impact on knowledge and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS. The study's results will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of such

interventions and offer guidance for future efforts to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic through targeted educational programs.

IMPACT OF TRAINING PROGRAM

1. **Knowledge Enhancement:** The training program led to a significant increase in participants' knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Pre-test scores were notably lower compared to post-test scores, indicating that the educational content effectively improved understanding of HIV transmission, prevention methods, and treatment options.
2. **Attitudinal Change:** Participants exhibited a marked shift in attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. The program fostered a more positive and accepting view of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and reduced stigma. This change is crucial for promoting supportive behaviors and combating discrimination.
3. **Behavioral Intentions:** There was an increase in participants' intentions to adopt safer practices, such as consistent use of protection and seeking regular health check-ups. This shift in behavioral intentions is a positive outcome indicative of the program's potential impact on reducing risky behaviors.
4. **Sustained Knowledge:** Follow-up assessments showed that the improved knowledge levels were largely maintained over three months, suggesting that the training had a lasting effect. However, some decline in attitude improvements was noted, highlighting the need for ongoing reinforcement.
5. **Program Effectiveness:** Overall, the training program proved effective in enhancing both knowledge and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS, supporting the need for continued educational interventions in schools.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS

1. **Sustained Knowledge:** The training program had a lasting impact on participants' knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Follow-up assessments indicated that most of the acquired knowledge was retained over a three-month period. This suggests that the educational content delivered was effective in providing a solid foundation of understanding that persists beyond the immediate aftermath of the training.
2. **Behavioral Practices:** The intention to adopt safer practices, such as using protection and engaging in regular health screenings, was positively influenced by the training. While immediate changes in behavior were not fully quantifiable, the sustained knowledge suggests a higher likelihood of continued adherence to safer practices over time.
3. **Attitudinal Shifts:** Although initial improvements in attitudes towards individuals living with HIV/AIDS were significant, there was a slight decline in these positive attitudes over the follow-up period. This highlights the need for ongoing reinforcement to maintain and

further improve attitudes, ensuring that the stigma reduction achieved by the training is not lost over time.

4. **Program Sustainability:** The program's effectiveness in maintaining knowledge levels underscores the potential for long-term benefits if the training is integrated into regular school curricula. Regular updates and refresher sessions could help sustain both knowledge and positive attitudes among students.
5. **Community Impact:** Long-term, the improved knowledge and attitudes among adolescents can contribute to broader community benefits, including reduced stigma and increased support for HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. This can enhance community resilience and support public health initiatives aimed at controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Overall, the training program's long-term effects demonstrate its potential to make a sustained impact on adolescent knowledge and attitudes regarding HIV/AIDS, though continued efforts are needed to reinforce and build upon the initial gains.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that a well-structured training program can significantly enhance adolescents' knowledge and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. Schools should consider incorporating comprehensive HIV/AIDS education into their programs to promote informed and responsible behaviors among students. Further research is needed to explore long-term impacts and optimize educational strategies for diverse populations.

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