ABSTRACT

A Survey of the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Residential Students at the University of the West Indies Concerning Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

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To determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices of University Students as it relates to AIDS, a survey using a self-administered questionnaire was conducted at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus. Ninety students from the halls of residence were interviewed. There were 41 females and 49 males. Their ages ranged from 18-39 years, the mean age being 22.5 ± 4.7 years.

Their knowledge of AIDS was adequate and compared favourably with the national KAP study, on average 84-92% of respondents had a correct knowledge of issues concerning methods of transmission and prevention. Forty-nine per cent (35/72) of respondents indicated condom use at their last sex act with most recent partner. When evaluated, 61.2% of females demonstrated a change of behaviour (p<0.05) while only 38.8% of males fitted into this category. Males were significantly more likely to report condom use (always) during sexual intercourse, p<0.05. Forty-two per cent of students (37/89) felt they were at risk of getting HIV infection.
These figures suggest that young people have still not accepted that a change in sexual behaviour is mandatory if the AIDS epidemic is to be controlled. It also appears that the females in this age group are willing to effect change, and by extrapolation should be empowered to facilitate this process and even be the initiators of this change.