

ABSTRACT

Knowledge, Practices, Attitudes, and Beliefs regarding HIV/AIDS among students attending the Rockfort Vocational Training Center

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Young and middle-aged adults remain the most vulnerable group for HIV infection. (15-39 years), the students of the Rockfort Vocational Training Center fall within this age group. This study seeks to determine the knowledge, practices, attitudes, and beliefs regarding HIV/AIDS among students attending the Rockfort Vocational Training Center.

The study was conducted over a one-week period, with a forty-two (42) item questionnaire being self-administered to 77.3% (116) of the student population. Two (2) focus group discussions were held with groups of six (6) to eight (8) female and male students to add detail and depth to the attitudinal aspect of the study.

The results revealed young adult students are knowledgeable about the modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS and measures to be taken to prevent the disease. However, there are deficiencies in knowledge regarding the signs of AIDS. There are also prevailing myths about HIV transmission.

The majority of student's indicated they had asked someone to have sex with them and they had participated in sexual activity. 83.3% of the students in the 16-19 years age group indicated having had vaginal sex while 54.4% of the sexually active students in this group reported they had had unprotected/unsafe sex and 15.6% indicated having had multiple sexual partners. The majority of students also indicated fear of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Although the students exhibited positive beliefs regarding safe sex practices, information obtained during the focus group discussion revealed sexually active students are not engaging in safe sex practices.

The study concluded that although they possess knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention, young adults students continue to engage in unprotected vaginal sex with multiple sexual partners, hence they are at continued risk for contracting and spreading HIV/AIDS.

KEY WORDS: Knowledge, Practice, Attitude, Beliefs, HIV/AIDS, young adults, risk factors.