

ABSTRACT

School attending adolescents continue to form an important target group of preventive and educational programmes that address sexuality and reproductive health.

A comparative study was conducted to examine the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices on HIV/AIDS of BAG and WAG students.

Information was initially obtained from a sample 490 students and 676 students attending respectively Ardenne High School and Mona High School. Statistically two groups were separated being the BAG and the WAG students. Subsequently a self administered questionnaire was used to collect data on various aspects of HIV/AIDS.

Overall this study shows the significant differences on knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices on HIV/AIDS between the BAG and WAG students. This may be an indication that preventive and educational programmes need to be re-oriented in such a way that existing approaches and new approaches deal with the different groups existing among adolescents. Further research is needed to understand these groups with their specific characteristics, values, interpretations and needs. Research could also investigate if there are other social-economic, cultural, demographical factors that make them so different e.g the comparison of urban and rural adolescents might be an interesting area for research on these various factors mentioned before.

The time has come for educators, community and faith leaders, and public health officials to design and implement comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention programmes that address the synergy of risks that threaten the health of young people.