

ABSTRACT

Students at the Mona Campus of the University of the West Indies are in the most vulnerable age group (20-39 years) for contracting STIs including HIV/AIDS. This study sought to determine the HIV related knowledge, attitudes and practices among students living on halls of residence.

Questionnaires were self-administered by approximately 10% (146) of the students on the halls of residence over a two week period and informal discussions were held with two small groups of students to gain greater insights into their understanding of the HIV/AIDS situation.

The results showed deficiencies in the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of students. Approximately 25% of students felt that HIV could be transmitted through blood donation and 29.5% said there was no link between STIs and contracting HIV. The students' attitude towards homosexuality was negative. The majority of students did not know the window period for HIV infection. Approximately 5% of students have had an STI and 15% of students who reported being sexually active were not using the condom. There was a significant association between the gender of students and condom use.

The study concluded that the students are at risk of contracting and spreading HIV and other STIs. There is need for intense education on HIV/AIDS for students living on the halls and the placing of condom machines on the halls will give students easier access to condoms.