

Letter to Editor

Health Education still needs the Knowledge level and Attitude of Male Students about HIV/AIDS

Sir

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infects cells of the immune system, destroying or impairing their function. As the infection progresses, the immune system becomes weaker, and the person becomes more susceptible to opportunistic infections. HIV continues to be a major global public health issue, having claimed more than 25 million lives over the past three decades. There were approximately 34 million people living with HIV in 2011 (1, 2). Some behaviors and conditions can put individuals at greater risk of contracting HIV, therefore, individuals can reduce the risk of HIV infection by limiting exposure to these risk factors. This disease needs more attention for its prevention and control worldwide especially in developing countries like Iran (3). Improving the level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS in general population especially in adolescents (as at-risk group for disease) can be effective in the prevention of this disease (4). One of the biggest challenges of school health workers is the implementation of suitable specific strategies for prevention of HIV. According to increasing HIV frequency and having no vaccine and definite cure for disease, the most important way for prevention is health education (5). Different studies in young groups of Iran showed that the level of knowledge and attitude about HIV/AIDS is not favorable. In one research about the level of knowledge in Iranian students, it was found that the level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS is at borderline and medium level (6).

We conducted a study in 2010-2011 on the male students in the second year high school in the city of Amol (Mazandaran province, Iran). Two hundred fifty students were selected randomly and divided into case and control groups. At first, their knowledge and attitude were assessed by a researcher-made questionnaire, after that, a training course was performed for the case group in 3 sessions with an interval of 10 days in a month. Besides this training course the educational pamphlets and posters in the classrooms of this case group were distributed. The level of knowledge was assessed by correct or incorrect responses to the questions and reported as mean and standard deviation.

Scoring the level of attitude was performed according to rating scale in the degree of good, medium and bad.

The mean level of knowledge increased from 14.42 ± 2.99 (before training) to 19.82 ± 2.72 (after training) ($P < 0.001$). The score of attitude increased from 34.58 ± 4.67 to 37.73 ± 3.84 ($P < 0.001$). There were no significant relationships between the residence of the students and their parent's educational level with knowledge and attitude of the students. The average grade of the students had significant relationship to the effect of training on their knowledge, when the average grade of students was more than 18, interventional training was more effective on their knowledge ($P = 0.024$) but there was no significant relationship between the average grade and the effect of training course on their attitude ($P = 0.52$).

Our study showed that training course has significant effect on the knowledge level and attitude of high school students about HIV/AIDS, therefore widespread and continuous health education through various means (like TV, Radio and schools) should be planned.

Citation:

Mouodi S, Seyedi Andi SJ, Javanian M, Jahanian I, Rezaee R, Shirkhani Kelagari Z, Ghazinezhad N. Health Education still needs the Knowledge level and Attitude of Male Students about IV/AIDS. Caspian J Intern Med 2014; 5(1): 55-56.

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Received: 6 May 2013

Revised: 8 Oct 2013

Accepted: 9 Oct 2013

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