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REVIEW ARTICLE

A STUDY ON AIDS AWARENESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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A Study on Aids Awareness among College Students

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INTRODUCTION

AIDS is the most dreadful enemy of human race; which is taking epidemic dimensions gradually all over the world. It has entered the Indian soil with disastrous implications on millions of people living in rural, urban and tribal communities. Every state in India is experiencing an increase rate of the transmission of HIV. Since youth are the easily approachable targets of HIV/AIDS, they are also considered as the vulnerable group. Everyone has a right to information and education about HIV/AIDS and these facts of life will help our young people to protect themselves from the infection of AIDS. An overwhelming section of our population is not aware about this dreaded disease, specially the illiterate and socially deprived people. Peer education proves to be the most effective way of changing attitudes and practices related to risk taking behaviour among educated youth. Therefore it is easier for such youth to reach other and further; spread the knowledge related to HIV/AIDS.

DEFINITION

AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome sometimes called "Slim disease" It is usually fatal illness caused by a retrovirus known as **Human immune Deficiency Virus** HIV which breaks the body's immune system, leaving the victims vulnerable to a host of life-threatening opportunistic infectious neurological disorders or unusual malignancies. The term AIDS refer only to the last stage of the HIV infection.

INCIDENCE AND PRVALENCE OF AIDS IN INDIA

An International Conference on AIDS, held in Vancouver (July 1986), has declared India the country with largest number of HIV infected people (5.25 million infected people and 13837 known AIDS patents). It has further been predicate that by turn of the century India would be the Global Capital of HIV/AIDS.

In India the first reported cases of HIV infected diagnosed were among the commercial sex-workers in Madras in May 1986. The first AIDS case was registered in Bombay in 1986. Since then a large number of cased are being reported from all parts of the county.

Increase in Number of AIDS Cases since 1986 to 30th September 2000

| Years | No. of AIDS Cases |
|-------|-------------------|
| 1992 | 212 |
| 1993 | 752 |
| 1994 | 849 |
| 1995 | 1200 |
| 1996 | 2621 |
| 1997 | 4236 |
| 1998 | 6821 |
| 1999 | 9695 |
| 2000 | 13867 |

Risk/Transmission Categories

| Category | No. of Cases | Percentage |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Sexual | 11266 | 81.11 |
| Perinatal transmission | 167 | 1.20 |
| Blood and Blood products | 694 | 5.00 |
| Injectable Drug Users | 671 | 4.84 |
| Others (not specified) | 1069 | 7.11 |
| Total | 13867 | 100.00 |

**Source: National Aids Control Organisation
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

India is experiencing a major epidemic of HIV transmission in persons with high risk behaviour viz. commercial sex workers, clinic patients intravenous drug user and commercial blood donors. There Is

evidence of a recent epidemic from urban center to rural population. It is also estimated that 5.25 million people are currently infected with HIV in India.

The number of AIDs cases are highest in the States of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu following by Kerala Delhi, Manipur Panjab.

MODES OF TRANSMISSION

Though there are doubts about the origin of AIDS, there is no doubt about its transmission. The question that come is how this disease is transmitted. There are many ways of transmission of virus which are as follows:

1. Transmission by Conventional Sex

Infection by the AIDS virus can occur during conventional sex. It has been bound that it is easier for a man to pass the infection to a women and not vice versa. The reason is that the woman is the recipient of a pool semen which is the most infected body fluid next to blood.

Women to men infection can occur when women bleeds during intercourse for some reason or the contact takes place during menstruation since blood has the highest concentration of virus.

2. Transmission by Injected Needles

This transmission occurs from sharing injected needles which are not sterilized at all or cleaned just superficially. This way the venous blood from one person gets directly into the venous blood of other person. This is the reason for drug users being the highest risk group.

3. Transmission through Blood Transfusion and Other Blood Products

Third mode of infection has been through blood or blood derivatives accidental injuries resulting in direct exposure to HIV infected blood and transfusion of blood or blood derivatives or the transplantaion of tissue or organs an infected donor.

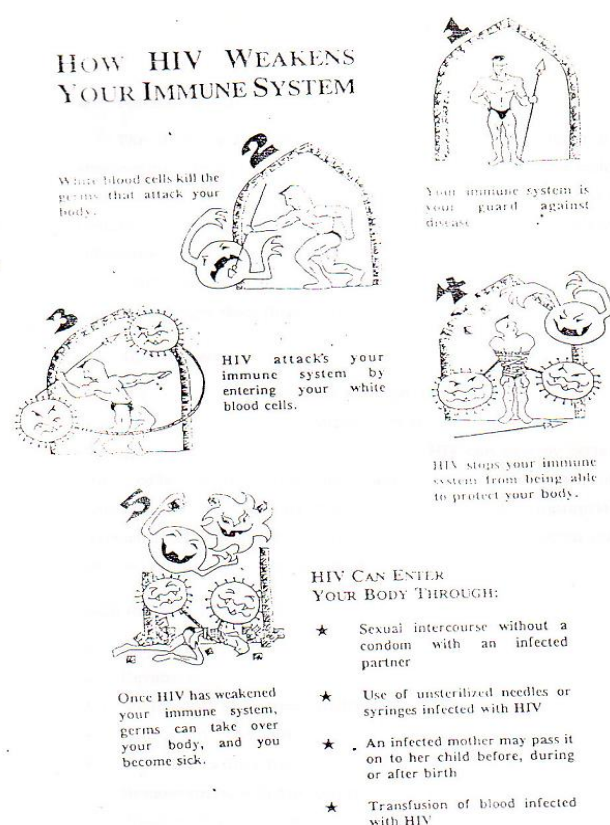
4. Perinatal Transmission

There is a very high risk of infected mothers giving birth to infected babies. During pregnancy although the mother's blood does not directly pass into the body of foetus but all the fluids containing the nutrients and oxygen that pass to the foetus come from infected blood. Infection can occur during delivery also. There are chances of baby getting infection through breast milk too.

MISCONCEPTION ABOUT AIDS

One cannot get aids by-

1. Shaking hands, embracing, contact with objects in phone booth, public transport, door knobs, money.
2. Shared use of china crockery silver glasses towels, bedding linen, toilet articles.
3. Eating and drinking rom communal dishes
4. Caressing petting kissing
5. Masturbation
6. Coughing sneezing tears.
7. Normal use of public toilets swimming pools, community shower (unless unsafe sex s practised there).
8. Medical treatment in hospital and dental clinics and in all therapy situation where normal rules of hygiene are observed.
9. Massage, physical therapy cosmetics, hair dresser, acupuncture, piercing of ears and other compatible as long as normal standards of hygiene are maintained.
10. Donating blood (until its HIV infective).
11. Scratches and bites by pets and mosquitoes.
12. Caring for AIDS victims and HIV positive people.



4. Full Blown AIDS

The immune system collapses at this stage and major life threatening infections invade the body. A coasting condition called "slim disease" linked to persistent diarrhoea. The AIDS patient is usually extremely thin and grossly fatigued and has multiple infections such as shingles, thrush, herpes and tuberculosis. Full blown AIDS seems to be always fatal; few people diagnosed with it have lived longer than three to four years.

5. AIDS Dementia

The AIDS virus can pass through the blood brain barrier, which normally "filters out" substances in the blood, which might damage the brain. Once past this barrier, HIV can destroy certain brain cells, causing symptoms ranging from mild confusion, memory loss, deteriorating thought processes and inappropriate behaviour to personality change. The normally young victim may require complete care for as long as he or she lives.

HIGH RISK COMMUNITIES

1. Prostitutes.
2. Devadasis.
3. Adolescents and street children.
4. Thalassemic children.
5. Intravenous drug-user.
6. Homosexuals, lesbians and eunuchs.
7. Blood, milk and sperm donors.

SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF AIDS

1. Initial HIV Infection

Within a few weeks of HIV entering the body, some people experience a temporary "Sero-conversion illness". (Sero conversion is the point where antibodies against HIV are produced for the first time) which may resemble influenza or glandular fever. During this time, the immune system produces antibodies against HIV which do not succeed in overcoming the virus. This is usually followed by a period of months or years in which no further symptoms appear, but during which the person is capable of transmitting the virus to others.

2. PGL (Persistent generalized lymphadenopathy)

Enlarged lymph gland, in the neck groin can follow this initial bout of illness and may be accompanied by fevers, night sweats, loss of weight and oral thrush (a fungus infection inside the mouth).

3. AIDS Related Complex (ARC)

The AIDS virus has by now damaged the immune system, considerably many opportunistic infections occur. Symptoms include fatigue, unexplained diarrhoea lasting longer than one month, loss of more than 10% body weight, fevers and night sweats. Oral thrush, PGL or enlarged spleen may be present.

CONTROL PRACTICES

There has been a consistent increase in the prevalence of HIV infection in the world and particularly in our country. It has been estimated that if transmission of HIV continues at the same pace, by the year 2003 A.D., about 6 million people would have been affected in India and the number of AIDS cases would exceed one million. Some of the control practices are-

A. Behavioral Change through Information, Education and Communication (IEC)

This control programme is aimed at the generation of awareness about HIV/AIDS and by a multipronged strategy comprising media, campaigns, social mobilization, collaboration and support to NOO's training. The objective of this component is to reduce the social and psychological impact of AIDS epidemic, by appropriate and adequate provision of counselling service as well as to ensure that the patients receive proper care inside as well as outside the clinical setting in respect of their rights and dignity.

B. Targeted Interventions

As HIV is not transmitted uniformly throughout the society, people practicing risk behaviours such as having multiple partners or injecting drugs are more vulnerable to contacting and spreading HIV. Such groups of individuals need to be made to create an environment conducive to changing risk behaviours to safe behaviour using a combination of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) strategies and relevant services such as STD care and use of condoms sufficient and safe supply of blood and blood products is ensured, we can curb this method of transmission. Various risk factors for transmitting HIV through blood are-

- a. Blood from professional donors.
- b. Multiple blood transmissions.

- c. Donors in window phase.
- d. When blood products are derived from pooled plasma of many donors.

C. Intravenous Drug Users

Most of the drug users share blood contaminated syringe and needle which results in the transmission of HIV infection. In order to assure the control on transmission of HIV infection, drug users require to be counselled on abstinence from drug and if that is not possible, switch over to oral drug. Use of disposable needles and syringes should be practised.

D. Prevention in Health Care Settings

Health care setting includes hospitals, outdoor clinics, nursing homes, dispensaries or any other place in home or community where medical facility is provided. Infection control measures such as decontamination of used instruments, equipments and materials, effective sterilization and disinfection, precautions in relation to blood and body fluids, infection and skin piercing procedures are sufficient to prevent transmission of HIV in health care settings.

TREATMENT OF AIDS

AIDS does not have a cure or vaccine so far. The main reason is that HIV is a clever little virus which changes its structure to escape detection and treatment. The treatment of HIV can be divided in two parts i.e. the treatment of virus itself and the treatment of complicating infections and tumors.

- a. The treatment of virus can be done by using reverse transcriptase inhibitors which are as follows-

- Zidovudine (AZT)
- Didanosine (ddI)
- Zalcitabine (ddC)

- b. Alpha Interferons.

PRECAUTIONS

Precautions are very important for the prevention of HIV infection. It means that all blood and body fluids of patients should be considered as infectious and all precautions should be taken, since it is not known who is infected with HIV.

Precaution starts with

- Hand washing.
- Creating appropriate barrier by use of gloves, masks, gowns, eye protectors etc.

- Careful handling of sharp objects.
- Proper sterilization and disinfection.
- Disposal of instruments after use/decontamination or sterilization of instruments including syringes needles and
- Equipments.
- Proper disposal of infected wastes.

Precautions should be practised by the medical officers, health care workers at all levels with all patients. This include doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, multipurpose workers, traditional birth attendants, laundry workers and cleaners; all should be told about the precautions and instructed to follow them strictly.

Removal of Social Stigma

It's important to emphasize that AIDS is everybody's problem and behaviour change, though difficult to attain, can bring about a great reduction in the possibility of getting infection. Society can, however, make it easier for people to adopt safer behaviour by specific steps e.g. Alternative occupation to commercial sex workers, use of needles and providing pupil with condoms. Furthermore by educating the community regarding the need to promote confidentiality of the affected and to avoid stigmatizing and discriminating against the affected individual.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological details of report entitled 'AIDS AWARENESS AMONG THE COLLEGE STUDENTS' are organized as follows:

1. Statement of the Problem

The present report aims at the findings of AIDS awareness in the under graduate students.

2. Description of Tool

The tool was prepared by the researcher herself which was designed in four parts to get general information, assessment of knowledge, values and attitudes and preventive measures for the AIDS. The tool consist of 45 items.

3. Sample Design and Selection

The study was conducted in different under graduate students of arts. The sample size was 30 under graduate students. Method of sampling—Purposive Convenience Sampling.

4. Locale of the Study for the Present Research Work

The sample of the present study was the students residing in Kanoria Girls Hostel, Jaipur.

5. PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION

Procedure of data collection was through questionnaire method; which were filled by the samples.

| S. No. | Item Scale | %age of respondents | | |
|--------|---|---------------------|----|------------|
| | | Yes | No | Don't know |
| 13. | I worry about acquiring HIV through sexual intercourse | 53 | 27 | 20 |
| 14. | I have difficulty in saying no to my friends when they ask me to do something against my wishes | 57 | 27 | 16 |
| 15. | Young people of my age should be taught to protect themselves against HIV infection | 80 | 10 | 10 |
| 16. | My parents would be upset if they found out that I am having homo-sex | 80 | 3 | 17 |
| 17. | One of the major mode of AIDS spread is homo-sex | 55 | 13 | 32 |
| 18. | Some of my friends think that using a condom during sexual intercourse is not enjoyable | 27 | 23 | 50 |
| 19. | It is all right for girls to have sex before marriage | 10 | 73 | 17 |
| 20. | It is all right for boys to have sex before marriage | 17 | 60 | 23 |
| 21. | I can be friendly with someone have AIDS/HIV | 43 | 23 | 34 |
| 22. | I feel sorry for people who has HIV/AIDS | 60 | 20 | 20 |
| 23. | Other students should be told if a student with the HIV is attending their college | 53 | 30 | 17 |
| 24. | Have you made any changes in your own behaviour or way of life as a result of what you heard or learnt about AIDS | 80 | 20 | 0 |
| 25. | Which of the following steps do you consider as most effective for students to avoid HIV/AIDS: | | | |
| | i) Delaying/postponing first sexual encounter | 17 | | |
| | ii) Using condom | 40 | | |
| | iii) Abstinence | 57 | | |

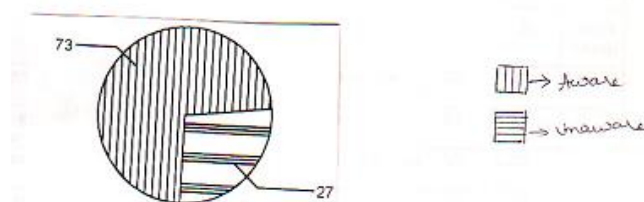
III VALUES AND ATTITUDES

| S. No. | Item Scale | %age of respondents | | |
|--------|--|---------------------|-----------|----------|
| | | Agree | Dis-agree | Not sure |
| 1. | Condom shall be freely available to all regardless to age | 53 | 26 | 21 |
| 2. | Those infected with HIV have only themselves to blame | 17 | 60 | 23 |
| 3. | Injecting drug users should be provided with clean needles on request | 73 | 27 | 0 |
| 4. | Prostitutes, drug users and homosexuals are responsible for the spread of AIDS | 57 | 20 | 23 |
| 5. | Safer sex should be taught to all young people in universities and colleges | 57 | 23 | 20 |
| 6. | Prostitution should be banned to prevent spread of HIV/AIDS | 60 | 17 | 23 |
| 7. | People with HIV/AIDS should not have children | 53 | 13 | 34 |

RESULTS

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

73% of the sample have the general information about AIDS, immune system and are also aware about the fact that AIDS can become a major problem in India and contaminated needles are the main mode of transmission of AIDS. The sample also admits that they have limited knowledge on AIDS. 65% of the sample knows what HIV is and that AIDS is STD (sexually transmitted disease).



B. KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

- 36% of the sample admits that (a) one can get infected without showing the sign of disease, (b) a pregnant woman who has

ANALYSIS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

| S.No. | Item Scale | %age of Respondents | |
|-------|--|---------------------|----|
| | | Yes | No |
| 1. | Knowledge of full form of AIDS | 75 | 25 |
| 2. | Limited knowledge on AIDS | 73 | 27 |
| 3. | AIDS would become major problem in India | 73 | 27 |
| 4. | Knowledge of Immune System | 74 | 26 |
| 5. | Knowledge of HIV | 65 | 35 |
| 6. | Meaning of HIV positive is AIDS | 76 | 24 |
| 7. | AIDS is STD (Sexually transmitted disease) | 67 | 33 |
| 8. | Main mode of spread of AIDS in India would be through contaminated needles in the hospital | 73 | 27 |

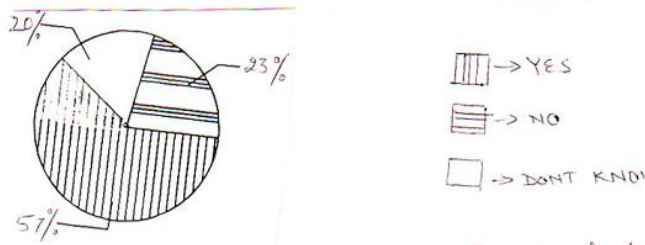
II. KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT

| S. No. | Item Scale | %age of respondents | | |
|--------|--|---------------------|----|------------|
| | | Yes | No | Don't know |
| 1. | A person can get infected with HIV and not show sign of the disease | 33 | 36 | 31 |
| 2. | A person can get HIV infection by sharing needles or syringes with someone who has the virus | 83 | 17 | 0 |
| 3. | A pregnant woman who has HIV infection can pass it on to her baby | 36 | 33 | 31 |
| 4. | HIV/AIDS can be cured if detected early | 33 | 34 | 33 |
| 5. | A person can get the HIV infection by wearing clothes used by someone who has this virus | 50 | 7 | 43 |
| 6. | A person can get HIV infection by being bitten by a mosquito which has already fed on a person with this virus | 16 | 30 | 54 |
| 7. | When a person has HIV/AIDS, his or her body cannot defend itself from certain diseases | 40 | 32 | 28 |
| 8. | One can tell if the person has HIV virus by his/her appearance | 17 | 47 | 36 |
| 9. | Have you heard of condom | 83 | 17 | 0 |
| 10. | Having unprotected sex with many partners increase a person's risk of getting infected with the HIV | 80 | 5 | 15 |
| 11. | I worry about getting through blood transfusion | 66 | 10 | 24 |
| 12. | I worry about getting HIV through indiscriminate use of syringes and needles by the doctor and nurses | 57 | 23 | 20 |

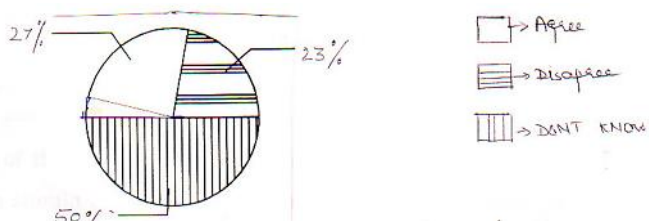
HIV infection can pass it on her baby, (c) AIDS can be cured if detected early (d) A person is unable to defend himself from certain disease if he has AIDS. 33% of the sample disagree with the views and 31% of the sample do not know anything about the issues.

- 83% of the sample admits that having sex with many partners increase person's risk of getting infected with the HIV, they should be taught to protect themselves against HIV infection, also they had heard about the condom. 17% of the sample don't know anything about the matter.

3. 57% of the sample was worried about getting HIV through blood transfusion, indiscriminate use of syringe and needles by doctor or nurse, acquiring HIV through sexual intercourse, 23% of do not care about such matter and 20% of the sample about do not know anything about such things.



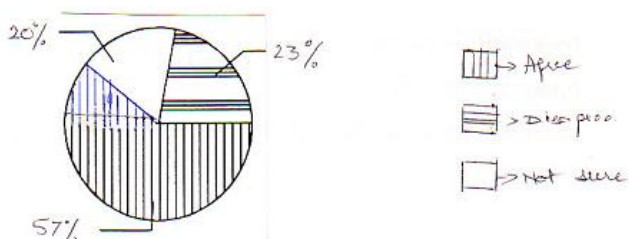
4. 27% of the sample respond that some of their friends think that using a condom during sexual intercourse is not enjoyable. 23% of the sample disagree with the view and 50% of the sample do not know anything about the matter. Also 40% of the sample respond that using condom could be the most effective step.



5. 80% of the sample said that they changed their life style like became conscious about the syringes injected when they heard about AIDS. 20% of the sample made no changes in their life styles.

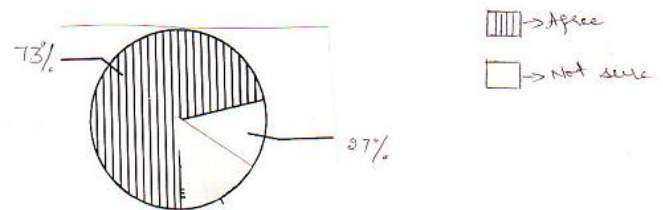
C. VALUES AND ATTITUDE

1. 57% of the sample agreed with the opinion like (a) condoms should be freely available to all regardless to age (b) safer sex should be taught to all young people in universities and colleges (c) prostitution should be banned to prevent spread of HIV, (d) people with HIV/AIDS should not have children 23% of the sample disagrees and 20% of the sample are not sure about these matters.



2. 73% of the sample agrees with the view that injecting drug users should be provided with

clean needles on request, 27 of them are not sure about this view.



D. PREVENTIVE SKILLS

The sample first gained knowledge through T.V. and newspapers; the student were shocked became worried about themselves and were also crazy to know about the facts and modes of transmission of the disease. The source of information which influenced their knowledge regarding AIDS were T.V., newspapers and printed media only. 87% of the sample had never even talked about the disease at their home they never discussed with their parents about the issue. Some of the student respond that protection from AIDS is possible if the following precaution are taken:

- Use of disposal syringes.
- Use of condom.
- Blood testing before blood transfusion.

CONCLUSION

- Many of the collegiate are aware about the disease AIDS & also have general information about the issue but their knowledge is very limited. Many of the students were aware about the mode of transmission of AIDS but do not know how does this affect the body & how to prevent themselves from the disease.
- Some of the students were found unaware about the matter that one can't acquire HIV infection through biting of pets & mosquitoes etc. Most of the students admits that they must be taught about the disease & how to protect oneself from the HIV infection.
- Some students thinks that using a condom during sexual intercourse is not enjoyable.
- Majority of the sample depicted thinking that HIV positive means AIDS i.e. they do not know about the phases of disease.
- Approximately half of the sample found having attitudes like condoms should be freely available, prostitution should be banned, people with HIV should not have children etc. to prevent spread of HIV.

- (vi) Most of the sample gained knowledge of AIDS from T.V. & Newspapers & want to know more about this. But many of them never discussed about the disease with their parents.
- (vii) The view of some students about the protection from AIDS was the use of disposable syringes, condoms & Blood testing before its transfusion.

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PERFORMA FOR AIDS AWARENESS

I. GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Do you know the full form of AIDS.
YES/NO If yes. Mention.
2. Do you think you have only a limited knowledge YES/NO
8n AIDS.

3. AIDS would become a major problem in India.
YES/NO
4. Do you know what is the immune system.
YES/NO If yes. mention
5. Do you know what is HIV, If yes. mention,
YES/NO
6. Does HIV positive means a person has AIDS
YES/NO
7. Is AIDS also an STD (Sexually transmitted disease)
YES/NO
8. Main mode of spread Of AIDS in India would
YES/NO be through contaminated needles in the hospital.

II KNOWLEDGE ASSESMENT,

1. A person can get infected with MW not show sign of the disease
YES NO DON'T KNOW
2. A person can get HIV infection by sharing needles or syringes with sane one who has the virus.
YES NO DON'T KNOW
3. A pregnant women who has HIV infection can pass it on to her baby.
YES NO DON'T KNOW
4. HIV/AIDS can be cured if detected early.
YES NO DON'T KNOW
5. A person can get the HIV infection by wearing clothes used by someone who has this virus.
YES NO Ear T KNOW
6. A person can get the HIV infection by being bitten by a mosquito which has already fed on a Person with this virus.
YES NO

- | | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 7. | When a person has HIV/AIDS, his or her body cannot defend itself from certain diseases. | 19. | It is all right for girls to have sex before marriage. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | YES NO DON'T KNOW |
| 8. | One can tell if the person has the HIV virus by his/her appearance. | 20. | It is all right for boys to have sex before marriage. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | YES NO DON'T KNOW |
| 9. | Have you heard of condom. | 21. | I can be friendly with someone who has HIV/AIDS. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | YES NO DON'T KNOW |
| 10. | Having unprotected sex with many partners increase a person's risk of getting infected with the HIV. | 22. | I feel sorry for people who have HIV/AIDS. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | YES NO DON'T KNOW |
| 11. | I worry about getting through blood transfusion. | 23. | Other students should be told if a student with the HIV is attending their school college. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | YES NO DON'T KNOW |
| 12. | I worry about getting HIV through indiscriminate use of syringes & needles by the doctor & nurses. | 24. | Have you made any changes in your own behaviour or way of life as a result of what you heard or learnt about AIDS. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | YES NO |
| 13. | I worry about acquiring HIV through sexual intercourse. | | If yes, Please specify the changes. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | 25. | Which of the following steps do you consider as most effective for students to avoid HIV/AIDS. |
| 14. | I have difficulty in saying no to my friends when they ask me to do something against my wishes. | (i) | Delaying/Postponing first sexual encounter. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | (ii) | Using condom. |
| 15. | Young people of my age should be taught to protect themselves against HIV infection. | (iii) | Abstinence |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | III VALUES & ATTITUDES: | |
| 16. | My parents would be upset if they found out that I am having homo-sex. | 1. | Condoms shall be freely available to all, regardless to |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE |
| 17. | One of the major mode of AIDS is, spread is homo-sex. | 2. | Those infected with HIV have only themselves. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE |
| 18. | Some of my friends think that using a condom during sexual intercourse is not enjoyable. | 3. | Injecting drug users should be provided with needles on request. |
| | YES NO DON'T KNOW | | AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE |
| | | 4. | Prostitutes, drug users & homosexuals are responsible for the spread of AIDS. |
| | | | AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE |

5. Safe sex should be taught to all young people in universities & colleges/Schools.

AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE

6. Prostitution should be banned to prevent spread of HIV/AIDS.

AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE

7. People with HIV/AIDS should not have children.

AGREE DISAGREE NOT SURE

V. PREVENTIVE SKILLS:

1. Where did you first hear or came to know about the disease AIDS.

2. What was your initial reaction about getting to know or hear about AIDS,

3. Tick the sources of information which have influenced your knowledge regarding AIDS, Newspaper/Radio T.V./Other Printed Media/Friends/ Parents/teacher/any other source.

4. Have you ever discussed about AIDS with your parents. YES/NO

5. How can you protect yourself from AIDS,