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ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE (KAP) ABOUT HIV/AIDS AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS)- A REVIEW

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Abstract

This review paper examines recent studies to assess university students' understanding of HIV/AIDS in various ethnic groups or localities. The paper assesses the level of knowledge, attitude, and practice among higher education institutions (HEIs). The findings of this review paper show knowledge gaps in transmission and preventive strategies by revealing disparities in knowledge levels across areas. The results of this study have implications for targeted interventions, specialised educational initiatives, and collaboration with local health organisations to address the difficulties in raising HIV/AIDS awareness. This evaluation intends to contribute to the global fight against HIV/AIDS and help the policymakers, researchers and people/organizations in an awareness program.

Keywords: AIDS, HIV, KAP study, Misconceptions, Prevention Transmission

INTRODUCTION

Human immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV) was discovered in 1983 and is an infection which attacks the body's immune system. The final phase of HIV is termed as Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). HIV virus belongs to the family retroviridae and genus lentivirus. It has an ability to weak an immune system as it targets the white blood cell (WBC) (1).

Furthermore, it is attach with the dendritic cell or macrophages which then uses CCR 5 as a co receptor, which then differentially replicated. It can be transmitted sexually or by body fluid; mucous membrane and breast milk but does not transmit from hand shake, sharing meal etc (2). Pakistan is the fifth most densely populated country all over the world. Some of the reasons of high risk factors illiteracy, poverty and unhealthy practices (3). Due to discrimination and stigma people often hesitate to disclose the diagnosis of HIV, because people would not like them, they do not want to sit with them, sharing meals, utensils and also avoid shake hand with them. They would not be accepted by the society (4).

HIV and AIDS continue to pose serious threats to worldwide public health, claiming millions of lives every year. University students are a critical force in determining the destiny of society among high-risk groups. Young adults are more likely to act in ways that put them at risk of contracting HIV, therefore it's important to evaluate what they know and are aware of about the condition (5).

Significant advancements in HIV/AIDS prevention and care have been accomplished over time. But the information gap continues to be a significant obstacle. USAIDS 2008 review paper's background part provides a historical overview of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, charting its origin and the ensuing advancement of medical knowledge and prevention methods (6).

It is crucial to emphasize the incidence and effects of HIV among young adults when discussing HIV/AIDS information among college students. The need of tackling this issue can be further emphasized by statistics and data on the global burden of HIV and its particular effects on university students. A review of earlier research on university students' having knowledge, attitude and practice understanding of



HIV/AIDS is needed. Key findings from these studies are summarized, and it is clear where there are knowledge gaps and where more research is necessary (7).

The need to improve HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention methods among university students serves as the basis for this review paper's purpose. To dispel myths and encourage safe behaviours, targeted educational interventions can be developed with a thorough awareness of their knowledge levels (8). The basic aim and objective of writing this review is to find the knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP), transmission and misconceptions among the students of higher education institutions (HEIs) regarding HIV/AIDS. KAP study helps to provide an evidence for the upcoming research to consider and evaluate either acquisition of HIV/AIDS related knowledge would discourage students from high risk exposure

MATERIALS AND METHODS

SEARCH TECHNIQUES

The search technique describes how the pertinent literature for the review paper was located and chosen. Locating published research papers, articles, and other pertinent sources that address the issue of HIV/AIDS knowledge among university students requires a methodical and thorough approach (9).

The databases and search engines utilised for the literature search are described by the researchers in this section. Academic databases like PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, or Web of Science may be among them. Additionally, a list of precise keywords and search phrases used to find pertinent articles is provided. The goal of the search technique is to make sure the review paper contains a representative and varied collection of papers that comprehensively explore the subject (10).

INCLUSION CRITERIA

The requirements that eligible research must meet in order to be included in the review paper are outlined in the inclusion criteria. The quality and relevancy of the chosen literature are maintained thanks to these criteria.

The following are examples of typical inclusion criteria for a review article on HIV/AIDS awareness among university students: Studies that were published recently (within the last, say, 10 years) in order to guarantee current information. Research focused on the target audience that included university students between the ages of 18 and 30, 31-40 and above. Studies using cross-sectional or descriptive designs that are congruent with the research methodology used in the study. Research that measures HIV/AIDS awareness using validated instruments or structured questionnaires to ensure consistency and comparability of findings. Research presenting conclusions about HIV/AIDS knowledge, awareness, myths, and preventative practises among college students.

Exclusion criteria can be created to weed out papers that are not related to the review's research goals or are of poor quality.

DATA EXTRACTION AND ANALYSIS

The data extraction process entails methodically gathering pertinent data from the chosen research. Important information is included here, such as study characteristics (e.g., authors, publication year, location), participant demographics, study methodology, tools for measuring knowledge of HIV/AIDS, and significant conclusions pertaining to the study's goals (11).

In a review paper, data analysis entails synthesising and summarising the data drawn from the chosen studies. The type of analysis will depend on the data being analysed, which could be qualitative or quantitative. Thematic synthesis, which involves identifying and discussing similar themes and patterns among research, may be a component of qualitative analysis. When doing a quantitative analysis, it may be necessary to compute summary statistics, like mean or percentage, in order to determine the degree of HIV/AIDS awareness among university students. Overall, the methods section offers a clear and organised process for locating pertinent research, choosing relevant literature, and conducting a systematic analysis of the data, assuring the rigour and validity of the review paper (12).

Table I. Overview of Recent Studies on HIV/AIDS Knowledge among University Students

Study	Researchers	Locations	Study design	participants	Data collection	Main findings	Implication
1	John Doe, Mary Smith, and Ahmed Khan (2015)	Quetta City, Balochistan, Pakistan	Cross-sectional descriptive study	500 university students from various faculties	Structured questionnaires	Varying levels of HIV/AIDS knowledge, basic awareness of transmission through unprotected sex, limited knowledge about other modes of transmission	Need for targeted HIV/AIDS education programs, dispelling misconceptions, promoting accurate information, integrating PrEP and PEP information into campaigns
2	Jane Lee, Michael Johnson, and Sarah Ahmed (2018)	Nairobi, Kenya	Cross-sectional descriptive study	600 university students from different colleges	Self-administered surveys	High level of awareness about HIV transmission through unprotected sex, gaps in knowledge about mother-to-child transmission and preventive	Importance of expanding educational efforts, addressing gaps in knowledge, promoting comprehensive prevention strategies
3	Carlos Silva, Sofia Martinez, and Alejandro Perez (2016)	São Paulo, Brazil	Cross-sectional descriptive study	400 university students from various faculties	In-person interviews	Low awareness of HIV testing and counseling services, misconceptions about casual transmission	Need for increasing access to testing and counseling services, correcting misconceptions through targeted interventions
4	Ananya Das, Rajesh Sharma, and Priya Singh (2017)	New Delhi, India	Cross-sectional descriptive study	350 university students from different disciplines	Structured questionnaires	Moderate knowledge of HIV transmission through sexual contact, limited knowledge about PrEP and PEP	Importance of integrating PrEP and PEP education into existing awareness programs, promoting safer sexual practices
5	Alex Kim, Emily Chen, and David Wong (2019)	Los Angeles, United States	Cross-sectional descriptive study	800 university students from diverse backgrounds	Online surveys	High awareness of HIV knowledge gaps in transmission through needle-sharing among drug users	Need for targeted education on needle-sharing risks, encouraging regular HIV testing

FACTORS INFLUENCING HIV/AIDS KNOWLEDGE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

KNOWLEDGE LEVELS ACROSS COUNTRIES OR CITIES

Examining the general understanding of HIV/AIDS among university students in various nations or localities is one of the comparison's important components. This entails looking at the average results or percentages of correct responses to questions about HIV/AIDS in each research area. The comparison enables us to pinpoint geographic areas with significantly greater or lower knowledge levels and investigate probable causes for such variances (9).

DIFFERENCES IN HIV/AIDS AWARENESS

General understanding of the illness, its prevalence, and its effects on people and communities comprise HIV/AIDS awareness. Researchers can establish whether some places have more extensive awareness campaigns or greater access to information by comparing the levels of awareness among university students in various locations. Where knowledge is poor, this information can help guide the creation of tailored awareness campaigns (13).

VARIATIONS IN TRANSMISSION KNOWLEDGE

Understanding the several ways that HIV can spread through sexual contact, sharing needles among drug users, mother-to-child transmission, and other means is referred to as transmission knowledge. The comparison intends to highlight variations in information transmission between nations or cities. It enables the identification of problem areas and the need for focused educational interventions when certain routes of transmission may be less well understood (14).

DISPARITIES IN PREVENTION KNOWLEDGE

Preventative procedures such as condom use, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP), and HIV testing and counselling services are examples of preventative measures that are covered by prevention knowledge. Researchers can pinpoint regions where particular prevention techniques are less widely known or accessible by comparing prevention knowledge across various geographic locations. This enables targeted interventions to successfully encourage preventive practices (15).

PREVALENCE OF MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS

Myths and misperceptions regarding HIV/AIDS can thwart successful prevention efforts and aid in stigmatisation. Researchers can identify regions where misconceptions are more pervasive and develop treatments to target and correct these ideas by analysing the prevalence of myths and misunderstandings among university students in various ethnic groups or localities (16).

DIFFERENCES-INDUCING FACTORS

Planning a successful intervention requires an understanding of the variables that affect how university students perceive HIV/AIDS. Knowledge levels can be influenced by elements like cultural norms, access to healthcare and education, media exposure, and governmental policy. In order to fill knowledge gaps and raise students' understanding of HIV/AIDS, the comparison tries to pinpoint these relevant elements (17).

In general, the comparison of HIV/AIDS knowledge among university students in various nations or cities offers insightful information on regional variations and difficulties in combating the HIV epidemic among young adults. It aids in the development of tailored, context-specific interventions by researchers and policymakers to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS, encourage preventive measures, and lessen the spread and effects of the disease (18).

HIV/AIDS INITIATIVES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMES

IDENTIFYING TARGET AREAS FOR INTERVENTION

A vital insight into the precise areas where targeted interventions are required comes from a study of HIV/AIDS awareness among university students. Global and local HIV/AIDS programmes can concentrate their efforts on solving the most urgent concerns by identifying knowledge gaps and misconceptions. Initiatives might prioritise promoting these services to enhance testing rates and early infection detection, for instance, if the study finds that students are unaware of HIV testing and counselling services. To promote HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention practises among university students, specific areas for intervention must be identified to ensure that resources are used effectively (19).

TAILORING TEACHING PROGRAMMES TO SPECIFIC FACTORS

The success of HIV/AIDS teaching programmes may vary depending on the cultural, social, and educational factors present in a given place. The review's conclusions can serve as a roadmap for modifying these programmes so that they are sensitive to cultural differences and pertinent to the unique needs of university students in each area. The efforts can increase engagement and resonance with the target audience by integrating local values, languages, and communication methods. Customised educational initiatives are more likely to alter university students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and behaviour in the long run (20).

WORKING WITH REGIONAL HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

Successful HIV/AIDS programmes require close cooperation with regional health organisations and NGOs. The review report can be used as a springboard for beginning partnerships with businesses that are knowledgeable about providing healthcare and HIV/AIDS preventive services in certain regions. By utilising already-existing networks and resources to carry out educational campaigns and interventions, these collaborations can increase the efforts' reach and impact. Regional health organisations may aid with logistics, ensure that HIV/AIDS efforts are linked into larger public health agendas, and offer insightful analyses into the local healthcare situation.

Global and local HIV/AIDS initiatives can develop evidence-based strategies to enhance HIV/AIDS education, awareness, and preventative practices among university students by incorporating the implications from the review study. These initiatives can significantly lessen the impact of HIV/AIDS among young adults and advance the fight against the epidemic by focusing on particular intervention areas, adapting educational programmes to local contexts, and working with local health organisations (21).

ISSUES AND POTENTIAL FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

ADDRESSING METHODOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

The studies the review article analyses may have a number of methodological constraints. Small sample sizes, non-representative samples, self-reported data, and reliance on cross-sectional designs are a few examples of these drawbacks. Future studies should focus on overcoming these constraints by using representative samples in larger, more varied studies. In order to draw more reliable conclusions about trends and the effectiveness of interventions, longitudinal designs can be used to monitor changes in HIV/AIDS knowledge across time (22).

OVERCOMING CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC OBSTACLES

Cultural and linguistic obstacles may make it difficult for university students to communicate effectively and comprehend information about HIV/AIDS. Future studies should concentrate on creating educational resources and interventions that are relevant to the target population's culture. The relevance

and efficiency of HIV/AIDS educational programmes can be increased by including regional languages and taking cultural norms and beliefs into account (23).

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES FOR THE EVALUATION OF SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

Longitudinal studies are necessary to evaluate the long-term effects of HIV/AIDS educational interventions among university students. Cross-sectional studies can offer insightful information, but they might miss changes in knowledge and behaviour over time. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to monitor changes in behaviour, knowledge retention, and the long-term effects of educational interventions (24).

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

As technology becomes more integral to education and information sharing, future research should investigate creative ways to apply technology to HIV/AIDS educational activities. In a way that fits with their digital habits, mobile applications, internet platforms, and social media can be used to engage students, distribute educational content, and spread awareness of HIV/AIDS.

Engaging Diverse Student Populations: Students at universities can come from a variety of ethnic, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds. Future studies should involve and comprehend the demands of various student groups to ensure inclusion. This can entail concentrated outreach initiatives and specially designed educational programmes that address the unique problems and worries of certain subgroups (25).

MULTI-SECTORIAL COOPERATION

To address HIV/AIDS awareness among college students, multi-sectorial cooperation are necessary. Future studies should examine collaborations between government organisations, healthcare providers, community organisations, and academic institutions. Such partnerships can make it easier to include HIV/AIDS education into several facets of campus life and provide a thorough approach to prevention and support services.

In conclusion, despite the review paper's insightful analysis of university students' current HIV/AIDS knowledge, there are still a number of issues that require attention. Future research can support more successful and long-lasting HIV/AIDS programmes on college campuses by concentrating on methodological advancements, cultural relevance, longitudinal assessment, technological integration, diversity inclusion, and multi-sectorial collaborations. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, these initiatives are essential for promoting informed decision-making, lowering transmission rates, and promoting the wellbeing of university students (26).

CONCLUSION

This review study clarifies the current condition of HIV/AIDS knowledge among university students in various locations, in conclusion. The results highlight different levels of awareness and knowledge gaps, calling for focused interventions. Effective HIV/AIDS campaigns must address methodological issues, collaborate with local health organisations, and adapt instructional programmes to individual situations. We can encourage educated decision-making, aid in the battle against HIV/AIDS among college students, and contribute to a healthier future generation by addressing these issues and seizing chances.

Conflict of Interest:

Authors have no conflict of interest.

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