

Symposium

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS HIV/AIDS AMONG PORTUGUESE ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Context: The incidence of HIV/AIDS has been continuously increasing among the heterosexual population, particularly, among young adults, which constitutes a world's major public health problem, for which Portugal is no exception.

Methods: This HBSC/WHO research evaluated knowledge and attitudes about HIV/AIDS among Portuguese adolescents. Structured self-reported questionnaires were responded by 4877 participants (2417 boys and 2460 girls), with an average age of 14 years.

Results: The results show that most are not sexually active, had their first sexual intercourse at 14 years or more and first contraception used was the condom. The findings show the majority has correct knowledge regarding HIV transmission and have positive attitudes towards HIV/AIDS. The results reveal significant variation in responses by gender: girls have more knowledge and less prejudice than boys.

Conclusions: It is vital to provide youth with knowledge before they initiate their sexual life, showing them the importance of avoiding sexual risk behaviors and that sexuality can be a positive experience.

Keywords: Knowledge, attitudes, HIV/AIDS, Young people

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