

# HIV/AIDS AWARENESS AMONG ARTS AND SCIENCE DEGREE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

*In this paper investigator has made an attempt to study HIV/AIDS awareness among college students. HIV/AIDS has become one of the most devastating diseases humanity has ever faced. It has become a major public health concern with about half of new infections occurring in young people. This disease has affected people from every nook and corner of the world without any age or gender parity. In this context investigator studied the HIV/AIDS awareness among arts and science college students. The sample consisted of 250 students of Degree College. A self prepared questionnaire was used to assess the awareness among college students. t-test was employed to find out the significance of difference between means. Significant difference was found among arts and science students of Degree College. Science stream students are more aware about HIV/AIDS as compare to arts stream students.*

## INTRODUCTION

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) caused by Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a modern pandemic affecting industrialized and developing countries. Asian AIDS epidemic has risen enormously and about 7.2 million people are presently living with HIV/AIDS in this region. About fifty percent of the new cases occur in individuals below 25 years of age. It is a matter of concern that India holds the second largest absolute number of HIV cases in the world. Though prevalence of HIV has an uneven distribution in India, Southern India and North-eastern states have predominant number of reported cases. To control this epidemic an overall awareness need to be created in general population and especially high risk groups. HIV / AIDS epidemic is worst among the youths as they tend to experiment with practice of risky behavior often with little awareness of the danger. This group is more vulnerable due to incomplete social, emotional and psychological development resulting in risky behavior. Many of them are not prepared to make safe decisions at this age, and without adequate parental monitoring they may be especially susceptible to risky behaviour. Peer group influence paramounts in this period of growth and hence, vulnerability to HIV also increases in individuals with friends who support risky behaviour.

We need to further concentrate on this younger generation especially the college going students as they represent the country's future. Due to an increase in the incidence of HIV in this younger generation

the economy of country would be affected considerably unless further steps are taken to prevent the transmission of this dreadful disease. The young population are the manpower and resource for a economically stable country. Hence, this population being affected means loss of human resources thereby resulting in downfall of economy. Since prevention is the key to AIDS control, empowerment of youth with knowledge about high-risk behaviour and its ominous relation with HIV is one of the most effective tool to control this pandemic.

Lack of awareness and fear of HIV/AIDS create key apprehensions among students and general public and may generate a barrier to successful educational endeavors regarding the disease. This might lead to a range of unfavorable outcomes such as seeking advice or reluctance to treat AIDS patients. Concerns about AIDS panic have among other things been linked to lack of appropriate knowledge about HIV and its transmission routes. Knowledge about HIV is the first step to avoid its transmission. Yet less than one third of young men and only a fifth of young women in developing countries know basic facts about the virus. Although condom use has gained acceptance in some countries, global use remains low, especially among young adults in developing countries.

Worldwide efforts to address HIV/AIDS have advanced in recent years. Prevention efforts are beginning to bear fruit, with indications of behaviour change and declines in prevalence rates in a number of high-burden countries. Many countries—supported by the WHO/Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) ‘3 by 5’ Initiative and the efforts of many other partners— have also made significant progress in expanding access to antiretroviral therapy. Still much more remains to be done if the goal of universal access is to be achieved. Global coverage of many of the key health sector interventions against HIV/ AIDS remains low, and growth in the numbers of new infections and people in need of treatment continues to outpace the capacity of health services to respond. Global financial resources also fall short of what will be needed to achieve universal access, and the sustained political commitment needed to tackle AIDS over the long term is still lacking in some countries.

## **NEED OF THE STUDY**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has become a human, social and economic disaster, with far reaching implications for individuals, communities and countries. No other disease has so dramatically highlighted the current disparities and inequities in health-care access, economic opportunity and the protection of basic human rights. Since 1981, the pandemic has killed 23.1 million people, out of 79.9 million total infections. Today more 37.2 million adults and 2.2 million children in the world are living with HIV. Two decades have gone by and humanity is struggling to find ways to face challenges posed by a little known virus called HIV. Our journey on the road to understanding mysteries relating to HIV started in the last decade of the 20th century. Needless to say that it was tough negotiating learned ignorance. One may say that this ignorance was partly due to lack of adequate and reliable information and was partly rooted in human self-belief that worst can never strike him. Hence to study awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among

College students is very relevant.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To study the level of awareness of HIV/AIDS among college students in relation to their stream.

## HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significant difference in the awareness level of HIV/AIDS among college students in relation to their stream.

## SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 250 Colleges Students from Distt. Fazilka (Punjab)

## TOOL

A self prepared questionnaire was applied to assess the awareness among college students.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

t-test was employed to find out the difference between the means.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**TABLE 1**

**Comparison of HIV/AIDS Awareness among Arts and Science college students**

Group	N	M	SD	t-value	Level of Significance
Arts	115	55.03	1.35	11.67	Significant at 0.01 level
Science	135	57.12	1.48		

Table 1 shows that 't' value 11.67 is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore arts and science stream college students differ significantly in their awareness related to HIV/AIDS. From this result it may be concluded that science stream students are more aware about HIV/AIDS as compare to arts stream students. Hence the null hypothesis that, "there will be no significant difference in the awareness level of HIV/AIDS among college students in relation to their gender stream" was not retained.

One major explanation for the high awareness of science students is that they have been introduced to HIV/AIDS topics in their curriculum. Another reason is that they are class of population

who have access to various types of scientific and health related study material etc. The arts students who have less awareness of HIV/AIDS are the ones who have not been exposed to any information due to non-inclusive of HIV/AIDS in their curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

Science and arts stream students differed significantly in their awareness about HIV/AIDS. The mean score indicate that science stream students are more aware about HIV/AIDS than arts stream students.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study would be very helpful for the members of the society. State Government as well as Centre Governments to make plan to stop the spread of this disease and save the adults from this dangerous disease and should increase the HIV/AIDS awareness by introducing various programmes in the rural areas. It would be also helpful to increase the life span of human beings of India like other countries. In order to create awareness among college students the following activities should be organized. It is suggested that more opportunities should be provided to all students to attend and participate in various programmes on HIV/AIDS organized by local Health Department, University, UGC, NCTE, DIET's, SCERT.

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