

Knowledge and Attitude of Adolescent Students of 11th Grade Aged 15-19 Years Old About HIV/AIDS

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Abstract

Introduction: HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) weakens a person's immunity. AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) is a group of symptoms and infections that develop due to weakened immunity caused by HIV. **Objective:** To understand the knowledge and attitude of 11th grade adolescent students aged 15-19 years old about HIV/AIDS at Colégio São Miguel Arcanjo Vocational High School **Method:** This research used qualitative descriptive and exploratory approaches. Sample on this research is Female and male students aged 15 19 years old from 11th grade at Colégio São Miguel Arcanjo Vocational High School in Dili who meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria. **Result and Discussion:** Based on the total number of respondents, 12 people participated in the research, 7 of whom did not have knowledge about HIV/AIDS, and 3 of them had outdated knowledge. Regarding signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS, only six respondents have no knowledge about the ways of preventing HIV/AIDS. Nine respondents have no experience accessing information about HIV/AIDS in media. Ten respondents said that they are influenced when their friends or colleagues do drugs or have casual sex. Seven respondents have not received information on how to keep a safe distance from HIV/AIDS transmission from their parents or family. **Conclusion:** Based on the research results, most adolescents lack balanced knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Keyword: Knowledge; Attitude; Adolescents; HIV/AIDS;

Introduction

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that weakens a person's immune system. HIV attacks a person's body by destroying the cells that fight infections (Ifeanyi, Favour, & Prayer, 2020). AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is a collection of symptoms and infections that occur when the immune system is severely damaged by the HIV virus (Mardalena & Apriani, 2020). Furthermore, AIDS can also cause other complicated illnesses such as lung disease, respiratory system problems, nerve problems, malignant tumors, and others.

Mahfudli dan Efendi in 2015 affirm that adolescence is the transition period from childhood to adulthood, characterized by physical, behavioral, biological, and emotional changes (Rais, 2022), (Ximenes, Pereira, de Oliveira, da Cruz, & Exposto, 2023). For adolescents, the main cause of HIV/AIDS is drug use, especially the use of infected needles, which indirectly relates to risky sexual behavior. Drugs and alcohol are also related to the use of unprotected sex (Ristianadewi, Septimar, & Wibisono, 2021)

Global statistics data from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), 2020, states that in the last year of 2020, approximately 37.7 million people were living with HIV (Rahyani, 2023). The highest distribution rates were in Africa (67.4%), followed by America (9.8%), Southeast Asia (9.8%), Europe (6.9%), Western Pacific (5%), and the Eastern Mediterranean (1.1%). Of the global data, 1.7 million were over the age of 15 with 36 thousand under the age of 15, including adults (19.3 thousand women and 16.7 thousand men).

The number of new HIV/AIDS infections globally in 2020 was 1.5 million, with 150 thousand being over the age of 15 and 1.3 million being under the age of 15, including adults (660 thousand females and 640 thousand males). The total number of deaths caused by HIV/AIDS globally in 2020 was 680 thousand. According to UNAIDS' estimation in 2021, in Indonesia, there were approximately 540 thousand people living with HIV, making it among the highest in Southeast Asia. As a small island nation in Southeast Asia.

Timor Leste shares its borders with Indonesia. Timor Leste is a post conflict state that gained its independence in 2002 and is one of the newest countries in the world. The first case of HIV in Timor Leste was diagnosed in 2003. According to reports from the Ministry of Health (2022), between 2003 and September 2022, a total of 1776 people have been confirmed to be living with HIV, of which 182 have passed away. Out of the total number of confirmed cases, 103 individuals have been lost to follow-up and have not started any treatment.

The Demographic Health Survey (DHS) in Timor Leste in 2016 showed that comprehensive knowledge about HIV prevention among young females decreased from 12% to 8%, and among young males decreased from 20% to 15%. Only about 7% of females aged 15-49 knew where to get an HIV test, while only 26% of males aged 15-49 knew where to get tested, which can be explained by the fact that only 4% of the total population has undergone an HIV test.

Secondary school is an educational institution where students aged 15-19 with changing characteristics in the young adult period can gain knowledge through both formal and informal education. The São Miguel Arcanjo Dili Vocational Technical College is a private school with a total of 110 students, of whom 105 come from three departments: Information Technology (48), Accounting Technology (27), and Secretariat Technology (30), the majority of whom are aged 15-19. Interviews with eight (8) students found that their knowledge and prevention of HIV/AIDS were lacking and they were not yet disciplined in reproductive health. According to Vice Curriculum Director Madalena Cardoso, students at the Vocational Technical School have not contracted HIV/AIDS, but because most of them are adolescents aged 15-19, they have the potential to contract the disease if they lack knowledge. Researchers were selected from the student in 11th grade because majority they adolescent have age 15-19, who have characteristics that have changed, both physically and psychologically, and whose abstract thinking, search for friends with similar interests, and imagination can have a significant impact imagination (imagine, condition, and role), about one is self to achieve dominant feelings and express their freedom.

Based on data, introduction and information presented above show that many adolescents are not yet knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS. This is what motivated the researcher to conduct a study entitled 'Description of Knowledge and Attitudes of Adolescents Aged 12-15 About HIV/AIDS'.

Method

The type of research written here uses qualitative and exploratory methods. According to scientist (Laut Mertha, 2021) qualitative research provides a description of a phenomenon or condition that occurs. Exploratory qualitative research is research that is conducted to search for someone's knowledge or explore new ideas about a problem that exists. This research serves as the primary instrument to collect actual data to explain knowledge and attitudes of adolescent student in 11th grade (ages 15-19) about HIV and AIDS.

Result and Discussion

Result

The Saint Michael Archangel College in Comoro was established by former students of Dom Bosco in 2002, starting with Pre-Primary Education. In 2004, they added Primary Education, in 2007 Pre-Secondary Education and in 2008 they added Secondary Education. The mission of the Saint Michael Archangel College is to develop humans as important elements and to develop the educational sector as a sheath for learning and other sectors, with a vision to participate in the educational development process of Timor Leste according to Article 59 of the constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor.

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Table 1

Female and male students in Saint Michael Archangel Technical Vocational College in Dili

No	Class	Course	Gender		Total
			Man	Female	
1	10 ^o	Accounting Technician	29	8	37
		Secretarial Technician	10	33	43
		Technician informatic	38	17	47
2	11 ^o	Accounting Technician	40	17	27
		Secretarial Technician	6	24	30
		Technician informatic	34	14	48
3	12 ^o	Accounting Technician	11	26	37
		Secretarial Technician	13	18	31
		Technician informatic	21	4	25
Total:			164	161	325

Sources: Administrative of Colégio São Miguel Arcanjo School, Dom Aleixo Administrative Post, Dili Municipality Year 2023.

Characteristics of the Respondent

The respondent in this research is a student aged 15 19 with a total 12 respondent

Table 2

Characteristics of the Respondent

No	Code Respondent	Class Dep	Name	Gender	Years	Local
1	R1	11 ^o IT	Estd. N.D.J.S	M	19 years	Delta 3
2	R2	11 ^o ACC.	Estd. Z.D.C	M	19 years	Fatuhada
3	R3	11 ^o IT	Estd. L.F	F	16 years	Fatuhada
4	R4	11 ^o ACC	Estd. N.B. da S	F	15 years	Comoro
5	R5	11 ^o ACC	Estd. C.de J.	F	15 years	Kampung-Baru
6	R6	11 ^o ADM.	Estd.A.G.S	F	16 years	Tasi-Tolu
7	R7	11 ^o ACC	Estd. F.G	M	18 years	Fomento 2
8	R8	11 ^o ADM	Estd. P.M.M	F	15 years	Kampung-Baru
9	R9	11 ^o ETI	Estd. A.J.N.C	F	13 years	Beto
10	R10	11 ^o ADM	Estd.J.T.B	F	14 years	Comoro
11	R11	11 ^o ADM	Estd. J.M.N	M	19 years	Kampung-Baru
12	R12	11 ^o IT	Estd. C.B	F	16 years	Manleu

Interview with Respondents

Results The interview with the respondents resulted in a total of ten individuals (12) being interviewed about "Description of the Knowledge and Attitude of Adolescent Student Aged 15-19 Regarding HIV/AIDS in St. Michael Archangel Technical Vocational School, Dom Aleixo Administrative Post, Dili Municipality." Respondent Knowledge about the Definition of HIV/AIDS. Five (5) of the respondents had knowledge about HIV/AIDS. They stated that HIV/AIDS is a virus that destroys or damages a person's immune system, causing them to develop other illnesses in the future.

According to one of the respondents' explanations: "As far as I know, HIV/AIDS is a virus that attacks or damages a person's body or flesh and eventually leads to AIDS.

AIDS causes a lot of illnesses because a person's immunity is already weak, and the sickness occurs many times due to unprotected sexual relations." (Interviewee R1, 19 years old.) Seven (7) of the respondents did not have knowledge about HIV/AIDS. They believed that HIV/AIDS is a disease that is spread through conversations and the use of shared items. One of the respondent's explanations: "As far as I know, HIV/AIDS is a disease that spreads through conversations, using shared items, and even sexual intercourse." (Interviewee R2, 19 years old.)

Respondent's Knowledge about Signs and Symptoms of HIV/AIDS

Nine (9) respondents have knowledge about the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS such as losing weight, sore throat, swollen glands, and nausea. According to one respondent's explanation, if someone has HIV/AIDS, they may feel sore throat, swollen glands, nausea, stomach pain, lose weight, and may experience other illnesses. (Interview with respondent R9, 14 years old) Three (3) respondents did not describe clearly the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS such as itchy skin and running away. According to one respondent's explanation, if someone has HIV/AIDS, they may experience signs and symptoms such as itchy skin, running away, and headache. That is my knowledge about the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS. (Interview with respondent R3, 16 years old)

Respondent's Attitude towards Prevention of HIV/AIDS

Six (6) respondents did not clearly describe the ways of preventing HIV/AIDS, such as not having random sexual intercourse and not sharing items. According to one respondent's explanation, as an adolescent, I know that the ways to prevent HIV/AIDS are to not have random sexual intercourse and not share items such as towels, living accommodations, clothes, and other necessary items, we should not share them together but we should use them based on individual needs. (Interview with respondent R1, 19 years old).

Experience of respondents accessing information on HIV/AIDS in the media

Three (3) respondents have experience accessing information on HIV/AIDS through the media to take care and prevent themselves, as the number of HIV/AIDS cases increases in the whole nation including Timor Leste. According to the explanation from the respondents: "I access information through mobile phones and other sources that say that HIV/AIDS is a very dangerous disease and that the number of cases is increasing, so we need to take care of ourselves and spread information to others to prevent and also receive information from health facilities or some distributed in schools." (Interviewee R8, 15 years old). Nine (9) respondents do not have experience accessing information on HIV/AIDS in the media, although they have access to information through mobile phones but not about HIV/AIDS. According to the clear explanation from the respondent: "I use a mobile phone, but I do not access information about HIV/AIDS. I only have some

knowledge on HIV/AIDS, because some health personnel came to distribute information in our school." (Interviewee R1, 19 years old).

Influence of free sex or sex with colleagues on students acquiring HIV/AIDS

Ten of the respondents have no experience of having mutual sex on the street. Most of the respondents, ten (10), said that there is a high risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS when having free sex or sex with colleagues. According to the explanation of one of the respondents: We can acquire HIV/AIDS through free sex. For example, if we pull out a needle to get a tattoo, which has been used on another person and has not been replaced, we can acquire HIV/AIDS if that person had it. This is what I understand, although I have not experienced it myself, but I try to avoid it from happening. (Interview with respondent R7) Two respondents (2) said that free sex will not lead to the acquisition of HIV/AIDS. According to one respondent's explanation: In my understanding, free sex will not lead to the acquisition of HIV/AIDS. (Interview with respondent R10)

Parental involvement in preventing HIV/AIDS Seven out of ten respondents in Dili live with their families and birth parents

Seven of these parents shared information with their children on how to prevent HIV/AIDS, such as being careful about relationships and not randomly interacting with colleagues on the street. According to the explanation from the respondents: "In Dili, I live with my father and mother. My parents give me information to keep me away from HIV/AIDS, such as being careful and avoiding sexual relationships and getting to know people well. That's why I also heard from my parents and I know it's good for me." (Interview Klemen R12) And seven of the respondents' families did not think about how to prevent HIV/AIDS. According to the explanation from the respondents: "In Dili, I live with my family and I can say I have two parents. I haven't received information from my family on how to prevent HIV/AIDS yet." (Interview Klemen R9).

Discussion

Respondents' Knowledge Regarding the Definition of HIV/AIDS The explanation of the respondents from ten different locations (12) is based on their knowledge

When asked about HIV/AIDS, seven (7) respondents did not describe it accurately because they said that HIV/AIDS is a disease that spreads through conversation and using drugs together. The interview results show that many adolescents lack knowledge about HIV/AIDS because they have less information from teachers, parents, and health personnel. According to PPNI (2016), insufficient cognitive information or knowledge related to this topic does not indicate a response, change, or pattern function of a person; rather it is a cause or support factor that can increase the variety of responses. According to Aisyah et al. (2015), a lack of knowledge will have a negative impact on adolescents when they face health problems.

Lack of knowledge about reproductive health and care will result in damaging consequences, and people who are living closely with them need to distribute information about reproductive health and understand illness transmitted through sexual relationships. According to the knowledge that is written, HIV/AIDS is a type of disease that is transmitted through sexual relations. HIV is a virus that attacks the body's immune system and can lead to AIDS. AIDS is a collection of opportunistic symptoms that occur due to a weakened immune system (Andri, Ramon, Padila, Sartika, & Putriana, 2020).

This statement is related to scientific knowledge and according to the Health Ministry in 2011, HIV is a virus that weakens the immune system. HIV attacks the body's immune system by destroying the cells that fight infections. AIDS is a set of symptoms and syndromes that occur due to a weakened immune system caused by HIV. In addition, AIDS can lead to other complicated diseases such as lung disease, respiratory system problems, nerve damage, malignant tumors, and others (Tadung, Kalintabu, Lombogia, & Agama, 2024). According to Nana Noviana's 2016 knowledge, HIV which is the Human Immunodeficiency Virus damages the body's immune system and AIDS which is the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome is a syndrome of weakened immune system from HIV infection.

Respondent's knowledge regarding signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS According to the interview results

Conducted with ten respondents, two (12) showed that three (3) of the respondents did not accurately describe the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS. The interview results showed that minority adolescents did not have knowledge about signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS. To ensure that adolescents have good knowledge about what signs and symptoms may occur when they contract HIV/AIDS, parents, siblings, teachers, and health personnel should share detailed information with them to avoid confusion with these various symptoms and increase their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. According to the written knowledge of those who wrote about HIV/AIDS, those who contract HIV/AIDS will experience symptoms such as weight loss, fatigue, stomach pain, swollen lymph nodes, and others. This statement is related to the knowledge of Nursalan (2007) Clinical Symptoms for AIDS Stage.

Major Symptoms, excessive heat in the body for three months, chronic diarrhea for more than a month and sudden weight loss. Minor Symptoms, chronic cough lasting for a week or more, infection in the mouth and throat causing itching and sores, and appearance of shingles and itching in various parts of the body. According to WHO 2016, when someone has HIV/AIDS, they may experience symptoms such as formation of lumps and clots in the body, headache, sore throat, white spots in the mouth, weight loss, fever, stomachache, and cough. These are signs that the person may have tuberculosis or cancer. In terms of respondent attitudes towards preventing HIV/AIDS, the results of the interview conducted with 20 respondents showed that 6 or half of them revealed a different but negative declaration in that respondents demonstrated attitudes that did not

support their activities regarding HIV/AIDS prevention. Although their attitudes were not supportive, they sought information from various sources or health personnel to help them. The results of the interview showed that half of the adolescents either did not know or did not demonstrate negative attitudes towards preventing HIV/AIDS.

Notoatmodjo stated in 2014 that attitude is like a response or reaction that is triggered by a stimulus or object. Attitude shows that there are some things that act as a response to stimulation in everyday life, such as emotional reactions to social stimuli or positive and negative things in a situation towards an object. According to the knowledge of the writer, the way to prevent HIV/AIDS is through A, B, C, D, and E. A: Abstinence, B: Be faithful to one partner, C: Use condoms correctly before sexual activity, D: Do not use drugs or share needles, and E: Education and important information for awareness. This declaration is related to Noviana's statement in 2016, where HIV prevention is not yet concentrated on ensuring HIV transmission to the body. Preventing HIV transmission can be done by abstaining from sexual intercourse, being faithful to one partner, and using condoms correctly. HIV transmission can also be prevented by sterilizing any materials used in the body or blood transfusions that may carry a risk. It is important for mothers living with HIV/AIDS to receive counseling.

Respondents' experience in accessing information on HIV/AIDS in the media

According to the results of the interview conducted with twelve (12) respondents, only three (3) of them have experience accessing information on HIV/AIDS through the media. Nine (9) respondents, although have access to electronic media, do not access information on HIV/AIDS. The results of the interview show that most respondents do not have personal experience accessing information on HIV/AIDS through electronic media. In summary, based on the writer's knowledge, students can access information through the media to increase their knowledge, which will lead to positive attitudes towards health, especially HIV/AIDS.

This declaration is related to respondents' experiences. Some respondents have positive experiences accessing information through the media, and this has helped to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS prevention. Therefore, it is necessary for us all to take preventive measures and avoid behaviors that can lead to HIV/AIDS. This statement is related to the research by YE Purnamaningrum et al. (2019) that prevention of HIV/AIDS can be sought more through electronic media such as television and the internet. Additionally, positive attitudes towards prevention and avoiding behaviors that can cause HIV/AIDS are important in the future (Aisyah, Syafar, & Amiruddin, 2020).

Women's attitudes towards HIV/AIDS prevention are better compared to men's. Women must have the knowledge about HIV/AIDS, which can help and share this knowledge with their partners to stay away from HIV/AIDS. According to Azwar in Budiman and Riyanto 2013, the factors that influence attitude include experience and the media. Experience serves as the basis for forming attitude, and personal experiences leave a strong impression. As such, it is easy to form attitudes when personal experiences

involve emotional factors. Media serves as a means of communication, such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, telephones, and others, that have a significant influence in creating opinions and building trust. New information regarding a certain subject provides new knowledge and can shape attitudes in the future.

The influence of having unprotected sex with strangers or colleagues in Paris in getting HIV/AIDS

According to the results of the interview conducted with ten respondents, only two (2) respondents showed no knowledge of the influence of unprotected sex with strangers in getting HIV/AIDS. The remaining twelve (12) respondents had knowledge, as they had received some information about HIV/AIDS from health personnel at school. The results show that most of the respondents had knowledge that having unprotected sex with strangers or colleagues in Paris might lead to getting HIV/AIDS.

Based on the respondents' knowledge, it can be concluded that there is a high risk of getting HIV/AIDS when having unprotected sex with strangers or colleagues, especially as there is a lack of understanding about the psychology of change that can lead to unexpected outcomes. Therefore, it is important to prevent oneself from being infected with HIV/AIDS. According to Yusuf Abdul's research in 2015, "Ransu Livre" means a behavior that goes beyond normal limitations. Based on the knowledge they have; it can be understood that "Ransu Livre" is a behavior that goes beyond the limitations of religious norms and has no limitations in their activities.

Respondent Information on the Role of Parents in Keeping Children Away from HIV/AIDS. According to the interview results conducted with twelve (12) respondents in Dili

All of them reported living with their parents and families. Seven (7) of the respondents did not receive information from their parents on how to prevent HIV/AIDS, while five (5) respondents received information from their parents. Most of the respondents did not receive information on how to avoid HIV/AIDS from their parents and families.

According to the knowledge of the writer, as a parent, it is important to provide thoughts or information to children to keep them away from diseases such as HIV/AIDS. By providing information, parents can increase their children's knowledge. The primary source of informal education that children receive is from their parents and families, followed by teachers and healthcare professionals. Therefore, parents must provide information to their children to prevent illnesses. This statement is related to Mustafa, 2003, who stated that the family is considered as a place for individual development, and the family is the primary source for education. The family is also the first place that determines how individuals lead their lives in this world (Rahakbauw, 2016).

According to expert Ngainun Naim, in 2011 it was stated that a mother's role is very important for children to achieve adulthood. Children are educated to be able to find their own identity and become their own person. Therefore, they are given the opportunity to make their own decisions in choosing their profession according to their vocation. In this matter, the mother's job is to provide suggestions, instructions, and considerations for their children's choices to become successful in their chosen profession. The mother also facilitates the needs of the children to achieve their dreams such as their educational needs and follows the guidance of their children if they feel that it is important for them. Research Obstacles During research, there are significant obstacles in determining a fixed time to meet respondents.

Although other students are making noise and hindering the interview process, when their teacher is not present, the interviewer should not face any impediments from other colleagues. This is due to concerns about the significant differences between each respondent in terms of their relationship with their teacher and classroom behavior. The interviewer must wait for certainty from the respondent that they are ready to do the interview at a time that suits them, without any hindrance or impediment from other colleagues.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion of the research results titled "Discrimination of Knowledge and Attitudes of Adolescent Students in the 110th Class, aged 15-19, Regarding HIV/AIDS at the São Miguel Arcanjo Technical and Vocational College in Dili, 2022", the writer draws the following conclusions: The majority of adolescents still lack knowledge about the definition of HIV/AIDS, while a minority of students do not know the signs and symptoms of HIV/AIDS due to a lack of information from safe sources such as parents, teachers, and health personnel, or simply due to their own lack motivation to search for it.

Half of the respondents provided statements that are different but negative, showing that they exhibit unsupportive attitudes towards their peers' activities related to HIV/AIDS prevention although they have different opinions. Despite having attitudes that are not the same, they do seek information from various sources such as peers or health personnel to gain knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevention. Many students have limited access to information on HIV/AIDS in the media, and many say that they will get HIV/AIDS if they have sex with someone who is infected or have the same social status. Additionally, most students live with their parents, and most without knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention from their parents or family member

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