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Awareness and attitudes regarding HIV and sexual behavior amongst university students in Novosibirsk, Russia

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The rapid growth of HIV incidence in Russia in last year causes anxiety in this part of the world. The main problem is misunderstanding of young population about the potential hazard of the infection. The aim of the study was to evaluate knowledge concerning HIV/AIDS among Russian university students. The study participants were recruited from Novosibirsk State Medical University in 2016-2017. Information, including demographics, sexual behavior, awareness and attitudes regarding HIV was obtained through structured self-administered questionnaire. A total of 530 students of 4th year participated in the survey. The age of the respondents ranged 19-38 years with mean age 20.2 years (32% - males). Eighty two percent were sexually active and the average age of first sexual intercourse was 17 years. Four percent of the respondents had sexual partner of the same sex and 13% with the unfamiliar persons under the influence of alcohol/drug intoxication. As a result on HIV awareness questions, 90% of medical students gave the right answers, they are well aware of the main routes of transmission, HIV/STI prevention measures and are concerned about the lack of coverage of this problem in the city of Novosibirsk. However, only 62.5% of respondents use condoms always or in most cases and 8% never do that. The main sources of information about sexual activity are conversations with friends (66%) and the Internet (75%). In the conclusion, the majority of students have sufficient knowledge of HIV-infection. Nevertheless, part of the medical students follows risky sexual behavior.

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