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Knowledge and attitude of HIV/AIDS among male dental student in King Khalid University

Awad Alsamghan

King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

Background: In Saudi Arabia, according to recent epidemiological data from Ministry of Health, 2009, number of HIV/AIDS cases was 15213. One of the most serious threats that dental students face during their clinical training, is the possibility of exposure to blood-borne pathogens, with the attendant risk of infection with HIV.

Objectives: To assess the level of knowledge and attitude toward HIV/AIDS among male dental students in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia.

Methodology: This was a cross sectional analytic study among all male students of the Dental College of King Khalid University, who agreed to participate in the study. A validated self-administered anonymous questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire includes four major categories: demographic variables, eighteen closed questions about knowledge of HIV infection, fifteen questions about oral manifestations of HIV/AIDS and seventeen questions addressed attitudes regarding treating HIV-positive patients, legal aspects, the right of HIV-positive health personnel to practice, and willingness to treat.

Results: Out of 400 male dental students invited to participate in the study, 363 returned filled questionnaire giving a response rate of 90.8%. Their age ranged between 20 and 29 years with a mean of 23.6 ± 1.6 years. The total mean knowledge score was 62.7 percent (good). Insufficient total knowledge score was reported among almost one-third of the dental students (34.7%). The overall mean attitude score was 66.4 ± 6.8 percent. The attitude in 9.1 percent was positive, 90.1 percent negative, and 0.8 percent passive. Pearson correlation coefficient showed students with higher knowledge scores had significantly more positive attitudes towards HIV/AIDS patients ($r=0.223$, $p<0.001$).

Conclusion: The results of the present study revealed that KKV dental students have deficiencies with respect to their knowledge and amount of information received on HIV and AIDS related topics. The results indicate that dental students in KKV are less well prepared for their future task of treating patients with HIV infection and AIDS and highlight a need for improving the dental school curriculum regarding HIV and AIDS.

Biography

Awad Alsamghan is currently working as an Assistant professor in Family Medicine Department, College of Medicine, King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia. He has over taken many responsibilities earlier like Demonstrator in Family Medicine Department, College of Medicine, King Khalid University. Senior Registrar in Family Medicine, Almanhal Poly clinics and Training Center. He did Family Medicine Residency Training program at Asser Central Hospital, Abha, Saudi Arabia under supervision of Saudi Commission for Health Specialties (SCHS).

awas1420@hotmail.com