

IMPACT OF WORKSHOPS ON THEMES OF WORLD AIDS DAYS

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Background: Abbottonians Medical Association®, Abbottabad, Pakistan in collaboration with UNAIDS Pakistan arranged two Workshops, the first in 1999, the Theme of which was "Listen, Learn, Live", and the second in the year 2000 with "Men Make Difference" as the Theme. The aim of these workshops was to create awareness amongst the participants regarding HIV/AIDS. **Objectives:** We used the data of the above-mentioned workshops to analyze the gain in knowledge and attitudes of the participants, with an idea to develop recommendations for the use of such workshops for increasing the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS. **Methods:** The data of the two above-mentioned workshops were used to assess the percentage gain in knowledge and attitudes of the participants. We also compared our results with the contemporary studies and developed our recommendations. **Results:** The results show highly significant ($p < .001$) increase in the HIV/AIDS related knowledge and attitudes in the participants of these workshops. This difference was more significant in the teachers as compared to the students, showing a higher level of awareness in the youngsters. The net gain in the knowledge was very significant. The knowledge about HIV spread increased by 28.96 % for the students and 19.54 % for the teachers, while the net gain in attitudes was 36.16 % for the students and 71.43 % in the teachers. **Conclusions:** Short workshops on the Themes of World AIDS Days are very beneficial for improvement in the level of awareness for HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

INTRODUCTION

Education about AIDS remains the most effective strategy to prevent its spread¹⁻² HIV/AIDS training at any level is independently associated with constructive behaviors, while controlling for demographic characteristics³. Farley et al⁴. concluded from their study that while students' level of knowledge about AIDS and HIV has been improving over time even without intervention, specific educational programs can still transmit important information, including information that is necessary to prevent or change risky behaviors. A number of contemporary studies have addressed knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices regarding AIDS/HIV in a similar fashion. They have reported a lot of uncertainty and incorrect knowledge in the Pretest, that was improved after short training^{5,6}. Here we present the result of two workshops organized on World AIDS Days in 1999 and 2000, with an objective to highlight the usefulness of such Workshops in increasing the awareness regarding HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study the results of two Workshops on HIV/AIDS organized by AMA® in collaboration with UNAIDS at Abbottabad, Pakistan are presented. These Workshops were held on the World AIDS Day in 1999 and 2000 on the Themes of that particular year.

The aim of these workshops was to create awareness amongst the students and teachers regarding

HIV/AIDS so that they may be able to protect themselves and other members of the community from this deadly disease.

The 1999 workshop was for Students ($n = 29$) of various Educational Institutions, while that of 2000 was for Teachers ($n = 20$). The participants were asked to fill a Pre-Test Questionnaire. Brainstorming sessions, small group discussions, presentations and video-film sessions followed this. Then the participants filled a Post-Test Questionnaire. Both these questionnaires contained questions about Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs and Practices regarding HIV/AIDS. In this study we have drawn an inference about the importance of such workshops using their results.

RESULTS

The results of this study are summarized in tables 1-3

DISCUSSION

Our results indicate significant gains in all the aspects of HIV/AIDS information amongst the Participants. These Workshops involved minimal logistics and resources, however the overall impact was very encouraging considering the collective and individual gains. The interesting aspect was this that gains were generally higher for the Teachers as compared with the Students indicating better awareness in the adolescents about the disease.

In a study conducted in India a Pre-Test- Post-Test evaluation of a school-based HIV/AIDS educational program was done. The Pre-Test was administered to students regarding modes of

Transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS. An educational program was instituted for half of the school day and one month later the Post-test was administered.

There was a substantial increase in correct knowledge about HIV/AIDS among students after single education program.⁷

Table- I: Improvement in General Knowledge about HIV/AIDS based upon Pre-test & Post-test results by the Workshops on the Themes of World AIDS Day

Questions	Improvement in Knowledge by Workshop 1999	Improvement in Knowledge] by Workshop 2000
What does AIDS stand for?	-	66.67 %
What does HIV stand for?	-	233.33 %
Do you think AIDS is Preventable?	12.00%	---
Do you think AIDS is Curable?	31.58 %	11.76%
Having HIV positive test and having AIDS means the same?	100%	II 4.29%
Can you list three Preventive measures for AIDS?	14.08%	23.40%

Table- 2: Improvement in Attitudes about HIV/AIDS based upon Pre-test & Post-test results by the Workshops on the Themes of World AIDS Day

Questions	Improvement in Knowledge by Workshop 1999	Improvement in Knowledge 1 by Workshop 2000
If you have an AIDS patient in your neighborhood, do you think it's your duty to tell everyone about him/her?	68.75	142.86
If you are invited to a party where you know that an AIDS patient will be there, will you still go to that party	3.57	0.00
NET GAIN IN ATTITUDES	36.16%	71.43 % j

Table- 3: Improvement in Knowledge about Spread of HIV/AIDS based upon Pre-test & Post-test results by the Workshops on the Themes of World AIDS Day

Questions	Improvement in Knowledge by Workshop 1999	Improvement in Knowledge by Workshop 2000
	0.00 %	5.26 %
Sneezing or Coughing	27.27 %	11.11 %
Sharing Utensils	7.41 %	5.26 %
Contaminated Syringes	16.00%	5.26 %
Using common Toilets	20.83 %	33.33 %
Mosquito Bite	107.14%	53.85 %
Sexual Activity	3.57%	0.00 %
Looking after an AIDS patient	7.41 %	5.26 %
Blood Transfusion	0.00 %	-5.00 %
Mother suffering from AIDS to unborn Child	7.41 %	5.26 %
Breast Feeding	115.38%	90.00 %
AIDS patient Kissing a <i>Child</i>	17.39%	11.76%
Sharing Clothes	3.57 %	33.33 %
Ear, Nose Piercing	69.23 %	38.46 %
Barber using same Blade for different Clients	35.82%	0.00%
NET GAIN IN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SPREAD	28.96%	19.54%

We feel that such Workshops can change the Attitudes and Tolerance towards the AIDS victims as reported by others as well. An interesting survey in Kuwait revealed that while most of the people in Kuwait were aware of the main Modes of AIDS Transmission, a gap existed about Modes that did not transmit the disease. This was reflected in their Attitudes and Practice toward AIDS patients⁶.

We found that Television is playing the most important role in dissemination of HIV/AIDS information. Although primary source of HIV/AIDS information is thought to be media sources such as television and newspapers⁸, yet a study by Bhattacharya *et al.*⁹ on Asian-Indian adolescents born in the USA found school programs on HIV/AIDS as the most useful source. Similarly, a study in Texas regarded doctors as the most reliable source of AIDS information¹⁰.

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