

Knowledge about HIV/AIDS among premedical students in Misurata, Libya and the effectiveness of a health education intervention

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Introduction: Even though anti-retroviral treatments for HIV/AIDS can slow down the course of the disease, there is no known cure or vaccine. Preventing the infection is the key aim in controlling the AIDS pandemic. A health education intervention was conducted among pre medical students in Misurata to improve their knowledge about HIV/ AIDS and the effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated.

Objectives of study: To assess the knowledge of premedical students about HIV/AIDS and to evaluate the effectiveness of a health education intervention.

Method of study: An awareness study, followed by a health education intervention on HIV/AIDS was done among 160 premedical students of Misurata, Libya for a period of 4 months. Assessment of baseline knowledge was followed by a health education intervention. Effectiveness of intervention was evaluated and improvement in post test knowledge was analyzed using t-test.

Results: Knowledge about the cause of AIDS, incubation period, ability of disease to make its patient exposed to other infections, absence of complete cure and the presence of preventive methods were excellent and knowledge about the ability to cause cancers, absence of an effective vaccine and 100% fatality were good on pretest evaluation. Knowledge about the modes of transmission of disease and the ways by which AIDS cannot be transmitted were poor on pre-test evaluation. Knowledge about all aspects was excellent on post-test evaluation. Difference between pre and post test mean scores was found to be highly significant.

Conclusions: The health education intervention was effective.