

FACTORS INFLUENCING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS AMONG STUDENTS IN GITHUNGURI DIVISION, GITHUNGURI DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) continues to spread in most countries of the world including Kenya. Since HIV/AIDS has no cure as yet, behavior change has been fronted as the most likely scientific basis for the reduction in HIV prevalence. The virus is spread mainly through sexual behavior and drug taking; behaviours that are generally private and sometimes difficult to discuss openly. This study looked at behavior change for the prevention of the spread of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) among students in Githunguri Division of Githunguri District in Kiambu County, Kenya. This study was a descriptive survey conducted among secondary school students in Githunguri District. Out of a total of 28 public schools in the Division, seven (7) of them were randomly selected using the stratified sampling method, while one (1) school was purposively selected as it was the only one of its kind, adding up to a total study sample of 8 secondary schools. School boys and girls from Form One to Form Four in the sampled secondary schools were used through the use of a questionnaire since the study required collection of primary data. Data analysis revealed that, behavior change had occurred among 56% of the respondents who had abstained from sex as compared to 36% of the respondents who had not abstained. Out of the 36% of the respondents who had engaged in sex, 50.8% of them had used condoms as compared to 49.2% of the respondents who had not used condoms. Females reported an average of 1.48 sexual partners, while the male respondents reported an average of 2.03 sexual partners. Behavior change was influenced by religion, knowledge of HIV/AIDS, influence from HIV/AIDS prevention methods and gender. HIV prevention efforts had a significant influence on behavior change for the spread of HIV/AIDS among students. The study recommended the need to have prevention efforts that focus more on adolescents so as to enhance their behavior change since nationally, some 400,000 students graduate from secondary schools every year. These young people represent a key cohort for behavior change communication and character formation.

KEY WORDS

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immuno- Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Behavior change, abstinence, Behavior change programmes for HIV/AIDS, Youth Friendly Services
