

Factors Influencing HIV Awareness amongst Adolescent Women: A Study of Slums in Delhi

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Abstract

The spread of HIV/AIDS in India is a major health concern. Despite sustained efforts, both awareness and use of condoms have remained low in India especially with respect to poorer, rural and uneducated women. Data at slum level is very limited to account for the prevalence and knowledge among about HIV/AIDS adolescent girls. This paper highlights on awareness, prevalence, knowledge and modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS amongst urban poor adolescent girls in the age group of 15 to 19 years of age. A cross-sectional slum based study was carried out in six slums of Delhi amongst 300 respondents out of which 40 percent of respondents reported to have heard about HIV/AIDS. Results showed that the most prominent source of awareness about HIV was television (83.2 percent). School teachers constitute the second most important source (77 percent of unmarried adolescents). The knowledge about mode of transmission through needles /blades /skin puncture was reported by 67.2 percent (69.2 percent unmarried and 66.2 percent married). About 65.5 percent of adolescents who were aware of HIV reported that the use of condoms reduces the risk of transmission. The regression analysis showed the use of condom and other demographic and socio-economic factors associated have a greater likelihood of having knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Ever use of Condom is a significant predictor of awareness about HIV/AIDS. Women who have ever used condom are likely to be more aware about HIV than the women who have never used. Correct and consistence condom use is an integral and essential strategy of the comprehensive prevention and care programmes which reduce the risks of HIV transmission. The result from the study highlights the need for integrated prevention programmes which would promote the use of condom for HIV prevention as well as STDs. There is also a concern to understand the reasons for the low use of condoms amongst young girls.