

## Attitude and Behavior of Nonmedical Students towards Transmission and Prevention of HIV/AIDS in Rafsanjan

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Article information	Abstract
<p>Article history: Received: 1 Oct 2011 Accepted: 27 Oct 2011 Available online: 4 May 2013 ZJRMS 2014; 16(5): 83-85</p> <p>Keywords: AIDS Attitude Behavior</p>	<p><b>Background:</b> To prevent AIDS it is required to create essential changes in attitudes and behaviors of the society. This work was conducted to evaluate attitude and behavior of nonmedical students towards transmission and prevention ways of AIDS.</p> <p><b>Materials and Methods:</b> This work was conducted based on stratified random sampling on 384 numbers of nonmedical students. Research instrument was a three-part questionnaire designed by the author.</p> <p><b>Results:</b> Findings indicated that 19.8% and 80.2% of the students have negative and positive attitudes toward AIDS, respectively. Besides, 47.4% of them had a relatively risky behavior whereas 52.6% of them had a secure behavior.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Efficient programs about changing the attitude and prevention of risky behaviors seem to be necessary.</p> <p>Copyright © 2014 Zahedan University of Medical Sciences. All rights reserved.</p>

### Introduction

Now, AIDS is a global problem with damaging consequences killing millions of people. Health Ministry warns about decreasing age of AIDS and widespread usage of psychotropic drugs that create a third wave of AIDS transmitted through the risky sexual relationships. It also emphasizes necessity of performing precautionary programs for better control of this threat in the society [1, 2]. The available studies have been majorly conducted on knowledge and attitude of the students towards AIDS. Among these works, one can name those performed by Xiaodong et al. and Jenkins et al. whose findings implied high knowledge level of the students towards sexually-transmitted illnesses and AIDS [3,4]. In contrast, the work conducted by Lotfi indicated a low knowledge level in the students towards AIDS and its precautionary methods, as they mainly mentioned TV as their most important knowledge source [5]. Considering the fact that youths are as the target group in strategies of Health Ministry, and regarding the fact that nonmedical students deliver no specialized education about this illness during the academic courses and their professors do not have the specialized knowledge about it, this research group made an attempt to evaluate attitude and behaviors of this group of students.

### Materials and Methods

This is a local descriptive study conducted using the stratified random sampling technique on 384 nonmedical students. Data collection instrument in this work was a questionnaire designed by the author in three parts including demographic specifications, attitude based

questions (11 items), and questions concerning AIDS precaution (16 items). In attitude section, the students gave their opinions through ticking the choices including "agree", "neutral", and "disagree" with scores of 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Statements associated with behavior are designed as Yes/No items. In the case an individual having or not having the risky behavior experience, he ticked "yes" and "no" choices, respectively. The scores 1 and 0 are assigned to the "yes" and "no" choices, respectively. Attitude and behavior levels were categorized as follows: If they obtained score is below 50 % of the total obtained score, it was considered as negative attitude and risky behavior; if the score is the range of 50-75 it was considered as relatively positive attitude and relatively risky behavior; and if the score was above 75 %, it was categorized as positive attitude and secure behavior. The primary questionnaire was prepared using the literature review and study of Iranian and foreign references. For questionnaire validity and reliability, content validity and retest techniques were applied, respectively. For data analysis, SPSS-18 software package with its statistical tests including kraskal wallis,  $\chi^2$ , and Spearman correlation coefficient was used and significance level of the tests was considered as 0.05.

### Results

In this work, 384 students participated. The mean score of participant was as  $18.4 \pm 2.26$  where 76 (19.8%) had negative attitude; 308 (80.2%) had relatively positive towards AIDS; and none of participants had a positive attitude towards AIDS. Here, 44 (11.5%) of the

participants disagreed with AIDS patients living with healthy people of the society; 154 (40.1%) of them believed that AIDS patients must be known to the society; 275 (71.6%) of them agreed offering the free condoms to the people; almost half of them (45.1%) disagreed with giving free syringes to the intravenous drug addicts; majority of them (88.3%) believed that precautionary educations about AIDS is necessary to be provided in the universities; finally 348 (90.5%) students believed necessity of precognitive tests before the marriage. The average behavior score obtained by the participants was  $24.3 \pm 2.2$ ; 182 (47.4%) of the students had a relatively risky behavior whereas 202 (52.6%) of them had secure behavior. No student was placed in risky behavior group. The findings of this study showed that more than half of students (60.7%) with sex experience did not use condom. Also, a surprising finding in this work was presence of 164 (42.7%) cases with risky behavior (insecure sexual relationship and intravenous injection) among the students. The securest behavior was observed among the students with a positive attitude towards transmission ways and prevention of AIDS. The  $\chi^2$  test indicated a significant relationship between students' attitude and behavior ( $p=0.0001$ ). This was also confirmed by Pearson correlation test (Table 1). Also, chi-square test (Table 2) indicated that there is a significant relationship between students' behavior and their marital status ( $p=0.001$ ).

**Table 1.** Relationship between students' attitude and behavior

Attitude	Frequency	Behavior	
		Risky	Secure
Attitude	Negative	N	55
		%	30.2
	Relatively	N	127
	positive	%	69.8
	Total	N	182
		%	100
$\chi^2$ test		$\chi^2=23.701, p=0.0001$	

**Table 2.** Relationship between students' behavior and their marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Behavior		Total
		Risky	Secure	
Single	N(%)	151(52.4)	137(47.6)	288(100)
Married	N(%)	31(32.3)	65(67.7)	96(100)
Total	N(%)	182(100)	202(100)	384(100)
$\chi^2$ test		$\chi^2=11.95, p=0.001$		

## Discussion

The findings of this work indicated that the majority of the participants had a positive attitude towards AIDS. Almost half of them believed that AIDS patients must be known to the society and disagreed with their living with

healthy people. In a study, Tavousi reported that the students have a negative attitude towards presence of AIDS carrying students in the school [6]. Also, the findings of Buskin et al. showed that 43 % of the students were positive about taking care of these patients and had negative attitudes towards them [7]. The majority of the students agree to give free condoms to the patients for preventing the AIDS while almost half of them disagree with offering free syringe to the intravenous drug addicts. In a work conducted by Ahmad Nejad et al. also about half the participants disagree with giving free syringe to the intravenous addicts [8]. The findings of the study performed by Rahmati et al. indicate that students have higher knowledge in transmission ways of the AIDS compared to the precautionary methods [9]. The findings of this present work revealed that a significant share of students had relatively risky behavior, whereas almost half of them had relatively risky behavior. Besides, the finding indicated that a significant share of the participants with sexual relationship experience did not use condom. Kolahi and Tabatabai in a study, "Knowledge and Practice of Tehranian Youths toward HIV/AIDS", 85% of males and 57% of the females with sexual relationship experience in the last year did not use condom and a significant number of them were not familiar with proper using of the condom [10]. Also, in a work conducted by Farahani and Ebadi, almost a third of students did not have adequate information on risky behaviors and AIDS [11]. Moreover, a significant share of students of this work were subjected to the precognitive AIDS test and know some of their friends with risky behaviors (insecure sexual relationship and intravenous addiction). Similarly, in study of Rahmati et al., almost half of the students had some friends with risky behaviors [9]. In a study performed by Mohammadi et al. on 15-18 old boys, it was found that almost 28% of them had premarital sexual relationship where almost 75% of them had several sex partners which implies the existing risky situation [12]. In this work, a significant relationship was observed between the attitude and behavior of the students where the secure behavior was observed among the students with a more positive attitude towards transmission and prevention methods of the AIDS. The recent works indicated that communication is not enough rather it is required to promote people's potential for dealing with risky situations through offering life skill educations [13]. The findings also indicated that the married people have better behavior and attitude compared to the bachelors. Through the works performed by Siziya and Lal, also a significant difference was reported between attitude and behavior of the females and emigrants with their marital status [14, 15], which can be attributed to the less risky behavior particularly the behaviors related to the sexual relationship among the married people. Marriage and sexual activities after the marriage is considered as a value in our Islamic and Iranian society which plays a key role to reduce many of social damages. The findings of this work indicated that there is significant relationship between the attitude and behavior of the students towards AIDS. Therefore,

through highlighting this attitude it is possible to reduce onset of risky behaviors. Today, AIDS is considered as an undeniable problem in our society and it calls for realistic strategies to change the attitudes and behaviors.

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### Authors' Contributions

All authors had equal role in design, work, statistical analysis and manuscript writing.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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