

HIV KNOWLEDGE AND RISKY SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN MALAYSIA:

FINDINGS FROM A NATIONAL SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

HIV knowledge is known to be related with a positive sexual behaviour. Although, the relationship between HIV knowledge and risky sexual behaviour among adolescents is complex and could be positive or negative. This study aims to determine the prevalence of HIV knowledge and sexual behaviours, as well as the relationship between HIV knowledge and sexual behaviours among school adolescents.

METHODOLOGY

This study used data from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2022 (1), a nationwide cross-sectional study on secondary school adolescents. Data on HIV knowledge and sexual behaviours were collected using a validated self-administered questionnaire, identical with the tool used in NHMS 2012 and 2017. Cross-tabulation was done through complex sample analyses using IBM SPSS version 26.

RESULTS

From 33,523 adolescents who participated in the survey, 1.3% had adequate HIV knowledge while 7.6% ever had a risky sexual behaviour. Out of the adolescents who had adequate HIV knowledge, 97.6% (95%CI: 84.11, 99.69) did not use condoms while 9.6% (95% CI: 2.70, 28.94) had more than one sexual partner. On the other hand, for those without adequate HIV knowledge, 88.1% (95% CI: 86.33, 89.72) did not use condoms while 10.7% (95% CI: 9.16, 12.37) had more than one sexual partner. When compared, results were not statistically significant.

Comparison between HIV Knowledge and Risky Sexual Behaviour among School Adolescents (N=2,506)

Variables	Use condom					Have more than one sexual partner				
	Yes		No		P	Yes		No		P
	n (%)	95% CI	n (%)	95% CI		n (%)	95% CI	n (%)	95% CI	
HIV Knowledge										
Adequate	1 (2.4)	0.31-15.89	28 (97.6)	84.11-99.69	0.066	6 (9.6)	2.70-28.94	23 (90.4)	71.06-97.30	0.865
Not Adequate	293 (11.9)	10.28-13.67	2187 (88.1)	86.33-89.72		259 (10.7)	9.16-12.37	2218 (89.3)	87.63-90.84	

DISCUSSION / CONCLUSION

Malaysian adolescents with adequate knowledge on HIV did not show a better sexual behaviour compared to those without it. This study result is in line with past studies where knowledge of HIV has not influenced adolescent sexual behaviour (2) (3). This study provides evidence for future studies to investigate other factors related to sexual behaviour among school adolescents in Malaysia.

Keywords: adolescents, HIV knowledge, Malaysia, sexual behaviour

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