

Current estimates indicate that more than 2.2 million people have already developed AIDS in Kenya since the epidemic began and that at least 750 Kenyans die daily due to HIV/AIDS related complications. Teachers Service Commission of Kenya report on teacher mortality showed that teacher deaths rose from 450 per year in 1995 to a staggering 6750 in 2001 due to HIV/AIDS.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the quality of knowledge that teachers hold about HIV/AIDS, their attitudes and the sexual practices that put them at risk of AIDS/HIV infection. This was a survey research that employed the questionnaire as the main tool for primary data collection. Subjects of the study were male (n=240) primary school teachers aged between 19 and 55 years in Rachuonyo district. Data was computer analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 10.0. Chi-square was used to determine the relationships between the variables in the hypotheses.

Findings include the fact that, generally speaking, knowledge of HIV/AIDS and the key transmission mechanisms is widespread among the teachers. Other than knowledge with regard to information about the biological facts concerning the nature, causes and symptomatology of HIV infection and AIDS, teachers were highly knowledgeable in all the other three substantive content domains of knowledge investigated in this study. Other than attitudes toward HIV/AIDS (the various beliefs, fears and concerns related to one's perceived risk of contracting HIV/AIDS), teachers held very indifferent attitudes toward HIV testing, condom-use and sexual abstinence. Knowledge of HIV/AIDS strongly correlated positively with most of the sexual practices investigated.

Apart from knowledge with regard to information about the biological facts concerning the nature, causes and symptomatology of HIV infection and AIDS, there is a strong positive relationship between knowledge of HIV/AIDS and attitudes related to HIV/AIDS.

The main conclusions and recommendation that emerge from this study for policy are that knowledge is necessary but insufficient for significantly altering attitudes and sexual behaviors. Therefore, greater attention should still be given to identifying and documenting other distinct sub-domains of knowledge so that they can be examined for possible different relations to attitudes and sexual behaviors.

We still do not know enough about sex and behavior and how it is changing among teachers. Therefore to monitor the effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention programs, educational systems should monitor changes in knowledge, attitudes and sexual practices as routinely as they monitor transition, completion and drop out rates. HIV/AIDS education must no longer be left to NGOs and support groups only. Instead, it should be fully integrated into educational systems and that means developing district and/or regional structures to support specialist teachers. Further studies should be conducted to verify this study and determine which variables are most strongly correlated to knowledge and attitudes related to HIV/AIDS.