

Correlates of Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Knowledge and Acceptance Attitude Towards People Living with HIV/AIDS: A Cross-Sectional Study among Unmarried Young Women in Uganda

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Abstract : Background: Youth in general and young females in particular, remain at the center of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Sexual risk-taking among young unmarried women is relatively high and are the most vulnerable and highly exposed to HIV/AIDS. Improvements in the status of HIV/AIDS knowledge and acceptance attitude towards people living with HIV (PLWHIV) plays a great role in averting the incidence of HIV/AIDS. Thus, the aim of the study was to explore the level and correlates of HIV/AIDS knowledge and accepting attitude toward PLWHIV. Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted using data from the Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2016 (UDHS-2016). National level representative household surveys using a multistage cluster probability sampling method, face to face interviews with standard questionnaires were performed. Unmarried women aged 15-24 years with a sample size of 2019 were selected from the total sample of 8674 women aged 15-49 years and were analyzed using SPSS version 23. Independent variables such as age, religion, educational level, residence, and wealth index were included. Two binary outcome variables (comprehensive HIV/AIDS knowledge and acceptance attitude toward PLWHIV) were utilized. We used the chi-square test as well as multivariate regression analysis to explore correlations of explanatory variables with the outcome variables. The results were reported by odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence interval (95% CI), taking a p-value less than 0.05 as significant. Results: Almost all (99.3%) of the unmarried women aged 15-24 years were aware of HIV/AIDS, but only 51.2% had adequate comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Only 69.4% knew both methods: using a condom every time had sex, and having only one faithful uninfected partner can prevent HIV/AIDS transmission. About 66.6% of the unmarried women reject at least two common local misconceptions about HIV/AIDS. Moreover, an alarmingly few (20.3%) of the respondents had a positive acceptance attitude to PLWHIV. On multivariate analysis, age (20-24 years), living in urban, being educated and wealthier, were predictors of having adequate comprehensive HIV/AIDS knowledge. On the other hand, research participants with adequate comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS were highly likely (OR, 1.94 95% CI, 1.52-2.46) to have a positive acceptance attitude to PLWHIV than those with inadequate knowledge. Respondents with no education, Muslim, and Pentecostal religion were emerged less likely to have a positive acceptance attitude to PLWHIV. Conclusion: This study found out the highly accepted level of awareness, but the knowledge and positive acceptance attitude are not encouraging. Thus, expanding access to comprehensive sexuality and strengthening educational campaigns on HIV/AIDS in communities, health facilities, and schools is needed with a greater focus on disadvantaged women having low educational level, poor socioeconomic status, and those residing in rural areas. Sexual risk behaviors among the most affected people - young women have also a role in the spread of HIV/AIDS. Hence, further research assessing the significant contributing factors for sexual risk-taking might have a positive impact on the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Keywords : acceptance attitude, HIV/AIDS, knowledge, unmarried women

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