

Abstract

This study examines the level of knowledge, attitude and practice in matters concerning sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among secondary school students in Fako-District, Cameroon. A substantial proportion of the respondents are sexually active and doing so with multiple sexual partners. Although 70% of respondents claimed they knew about STDs, not more than 16.1% of them could name any one common STD and give its signs or symptoms. Knowledge about prevention and complications of STDs was equally poor. The school teacher was the principal source of information followed by magazines/books. Among the respondents who had had an STD, only 8% had consulted in an STD clinic, 13.6 and 15.4% respectively to a Doctor and in Hospital, 43% received no treatment and another 19% had gone to chemist shops. The implication of these results together with the needs of the students are discussed. In Fako district, Cameroon, a self-administered questionnaire was given to 1693 randomly selected students from 10 schools. The findings indicate that although 70.2% knew that disease can be transmitted sexually and 84% were aware that an STDs except AIDS could be cured, only barely 50% in the highest education group could define symptoms. Furthermore, of the 32% having an STD, 43% received no treatment, and 19.2% had gone to a chemist, where untrained medical staff without proper laboratory facilities provided treatment. The reason for this alarming situation is the lack of correct information on STDs, the lack of facilities and staff where adolescents can receive compassion and understanding, and maybe victimization by staff and parents. Since the school teacher was identified as the primary source of information, it is suggested that sex education or family life education be addressed in schools with an emphasis on the nature of infection, transmission, symptoms, and available treatment facilities for STDs.