

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL
WORK**

TITLE:

**HIV / AIDS RISK PERCEPTION AND RESPONSIVE BEHAVIOUR
AMONG UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI MEDICAL STUDENTS. //**

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ABSTRACT

The National development plan (1997-2001) proclaims HIV/AIDS as the most important health challenge that Kenya has faced in its post independence history. It is the only known health problem that has the potential to reverse significant gains made in life expectancy and infant mortality. The threat posed by the AIDS pandemic in Kenya requires that AIDS control programmes must move beyond teaching facts on AIDS, if AIDS prevention is to be achieved (Becker et al, 1998). Though knowledge about AIDS has been important in reducing risk of infection, research has proved numerous times that knowledge alone is not sufficient to induce behaviour change among the individuals (Kiragu et al, 1993). The prevalence of HIV among the youth in Nairobi has been increasing and has become an issue of concern especially at the University of Nairobi (ADEA, 2001, NASCOP, 2001). In addition, available statistics suggests that University of Nairobi youths involve themselves in high-risk behaviour and if not checked, leaves little scope for optimism (ADEA, 2001).

The objectives of this study were; to establish HIV / AIDS risk perception among Medical Students, to establish the responsive behaviour against HIV/ AIDS risk perception among the Medical Students, to investigate the sources of information on HIV among the Medical students and also to study how the different sources of information on HIV/ AIDS influence the HIV/ AIDS risk perception and responsive behaviour among Medical Students.

This study was a cross sectional survey where the reseracher targeted Medical undergraduate Students from the University of Nairobi who were aged between 19-25 years old. These Students were in Medical, Dental, Pharmacy and Nursing faculties. The researcher sampled 130 Students and 10 key informants and all of them gave responses to the questionnaires.

Data was then collected using semi-structured questionnaires and was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The data was coded and entered into a spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and excel packages and presented using frequencies, percentages and mean scores and frequency tables, bar graphs and pie charts.

From the study, the reseracher found that most of the Medical Students in the University of Nairobi were already engaged in sexual intercourse. This means that these Students were at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. The study also concludes that in order to protect themselves

from contracting the virus, most of the students used condoms regularly. This means that the students were well informed that condoms were effective in preventing the contraction of HIV/AIDS. The study also established that people i.e. lecturers, friends and relatives were the main sources of information to these Students on HIV/AIDS and also on how to protect themselves from contracting the virus. These people and especially friends may give the students wrong information or sometimes the right one but it is a source of information that is uncontrollable but effective in this case. Friends may also give pressure to one another and encourage one another to have sexual intercourse and hence be at a risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

The study also recommended that a number of factors and methodologies needed to be put in place to ensure that the students are kept out of the vice of contracting HIV. These include; programmes and counselling session to educate and keep the students informed on the dangers of contracting HIV and also certain activities need to be organized so that the students can spend their time in them when they are idle so that they can channel their energies in meaningful activities rather than drug abuse and/or having sex with their partners either in the University or outside the University.