

ABSTRACT

Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) is recognized as a critical component of effective HIV prevention initiative and has therefore been promoted nationally and within universities in Kenya. Upon successful counselling and testing those found to be HIV negative are informed to take the necessary measures to protect themselves while the infected are advised to start the required medication. This study examined the attitudes toward VCT services among university students in four Kenyan universities. 980 students filled self administered questionnaires. Results showed that 38.5% of the subjects had tested for HIV in the last 12 months and students (55.8%) felt less susceptible to HIV infection. Findings from a factor analysis revealed that the intention to seek the services was associated with five attitude subscales that were ranked as follows (i) people's and personal concerns, (ii) friends concerns, (iii) value of testing, (iv) confidentiality and support, and (v) perceived susceptibility. The first three items are associated with stigma which was evidenced in the subjects' report that admitting that one should test for HIV would imply that one has engaged in immoral behaviour. Secondly, subjects felt that their friends would look down on them if they tested for HIV. Knowing the students' attitudes will therefore assist in the development of appropriate VCT interventions that will promote HIV testing and behaviour change.