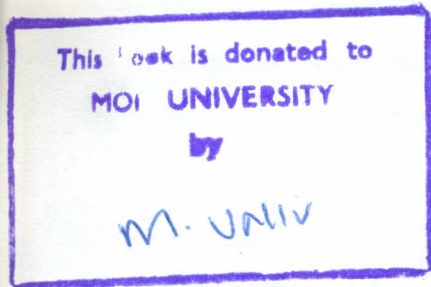


KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL  
STUDENTS TOWARDS PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV INFECTION IN  
ELDORET WEST DISTRICT, KENYA



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## ABSTRACT

### Background

The possession of accurate knowledge about HIV/AIDS, its transmission, and prevention is critical in the prevention of HIV infection and stemming the stigma and discrimination of infected together with affected persons. However knowledge alone might not reflect the practice and attitudes of those possessing it. Therefore safe sex practices and appropriate attitudes are also necessary in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Targeting the right population at the right time such as making high-risk groups the priority for preventive interventions at the earliest stage of the epidemic has been identified as an important strategy for HIV/AIDS. The school going children in Kenya have been targeted with such interventions through the implementation of a curriculum on HIV/AIDS but no study aimed particularly at this age group has been done to assess the impact of such interventions.

**Broad objective:** To assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices towards human immunodeficiency virus infection among students in secondary schools in Eldoret west district, Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

**Methodology:** This was a cross sectional study carried out between March and July 2011 among students in secondary schools in Eldoret West district, Kenya. Students in the adolescent age group were the study subjects. A researcher administered questionnaire in English was used to collect the data. Descriptive data on demographic characteristics together with data on knowledge, attitudes and practices was collected.

**Results:** Three hundred and thirty nine students from ten schools were interviewed. The male to female ratio was about 1:1 The students studied ranged in age from 13-18 years and the median age of those interviewed was 16 years. Seventy five percent (75.5%) were knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS. The most common source of information for the students was school teachers (77.6%). Majority of the student scored well in the attitude score and therefore would be tolerant towards people living with HIV/AIDS. About twenty four percent (23.9%) had had sex, with a mean age of first intercourse being 12.8 years. Majority of those who had had sex (63.2%) did not use any protection.

**Conclusions:** There is a high level of knowledge among secondary school students in Eldoret west district; however it does not meet the UNGASS goals. Majority of the students have a positive attitude towards PLWA's. Almost a quarter of the youth studied are sexually active, majority of who do not practice safe sex.