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Factors Influence on Knowledge of Aids among First Year Students of Eastern University, Sri Lanka

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¹Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has a great impact on society, both as an illness and as a source of discrimination. Numerous social and behavioral factors are involved in the spread of AIDS such as prostitution, broken homes, sexual disharmony, easy money, emotional immaturity, urbanization and industrialization, changing behavioral patterns, social stigma and alcoholism. Lack of information about the causes and risk factors of AIDS can place a large number of young people at the risk of acquiring Human Immunodeficiency Virus infection (HIV). Therefore, knowledge regarding AIDS is an essential precursor of sexual risk reduction. The aim of the study was to assess the influence of socio demographic and educational related factors in the knowledge of AIDS among first year students of the Eastern University, Sri Lanka. This was a descriptive cross-sectional study carried out among 300 first year students of the Eastern University. Stratified random sampling method was used to select sample. Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Among the 300 participants, 36.3 % were male and 63.7 % were female. 46.7 % of them were Tamil, 30 %, 20.7% and 2.7% were Sinhalese, Muslims and Burgers respectively. The mean knowledge score regarding AIDS among first year students of the Eastern University was 43.7%. Female students had higher knowledge than male students. Health care students had higher knowledge than other faculties' students. All male and female participants were aware that AIDS is a sexually transmitted disease. There was a significant association between mean knowledge scores of AIDS and gender, area, awareness programme participation, ethnicity, faculty, stream of A/L study, and source of information obtained ($p < 0.05$). The knowledge regarding AIDS was average among majority of first year students of the Eastern University. Knowledge about transmission methods, signs and symptoms and preventive measures of AIDS was good among all students.

Key Words: *AIDS, Knowledge, Transmission methods, Preventive methods*

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