



Key Population Surveillance

Goal and Proposed Outcomes

NASTAD Ethiopia, in partnership with Dire Dawa University (DDU) and Dire Dawa Regional Health Bureau, was asked to implement an assessment of HIV risk and prevalence among young people in Ethiopia. Previous studies in Ethiopia revealed that young people, including university students, are engaging in sexual activity with multiple partners and using condoms inconsistently; these behaviors increase their likelihood of acquiring HIV. A survey conducted in 2009 at DDU found 2.5% of student participants were HIV positive.

This assessment sought to estimate the HIV prevalence among DDU students, and define what demographics, knowledge, and behaviors might contribute to greater risk of HIV infection among the cohort. Specific behaviors of interest included sexual practices, drug and alcohol use, HIV and STI knowledge and attitudes, and treatment seeking behavior for HIV/STI diagnosis.



Strategy and Approach Used

A cross-sectional study was implemented among students at DDU, one of 13 Ethiopian universities, with 7,938 students enrolled.

A representative sample of 983 students was systematically chosen by selecting every eighth student from a list of enrolled students. Students aged 15 years or older and currently enrolled were eligible to participate. After providing written consent, students were asked to voluntarily respond to a self-administered paper questionnaire. In an adjacent room, participants were offered HIV counseling and testing, performed by a certified counselor using the

Ethiopian HIV testing and counseling algorithm. Participants' questionnaire responses and HIV test results were entered in the study database, using the unique subject identification number as an identifier.

The success of the assessment was ensured by strong collaboration and joint planning between key partners. Defining the roles and responsibilities of each party in a memorandum of understanding helped deliver activities on time.

Results

- 967 student participated in the survey and 961 received HIV testing and counseling
- 4 students were found to be HIV-positive for a prevalence rate of 0.4%
- 49.9% students reported ever having sex, and 53.0% of these students reported having sex in the past 12 months
- Females were more likely to report first having sex after coming to the university and not having used condoms during their first intercourse
- Males were more likely to report sex with multiple partners in the past 12 months and having ever used alcohol or drugs.

The presence of a well-developed protocol will guide the implementation of future school-based HIV risk assessments, the results of which can be used for trend monitoring, evidence-based planning, and evaluation.

Using the protocol and similar methods, meta research on university students HIV prevalence and risk behaviors at a national level can be established.

In general a system to do the same survey in the same university or other universities was created from this experience.

Summary of Outcomes and Impact

The aim of this joint assessment was to share skills and expertise in conducting research and to build the capacity of local partners so that they can conduct regular assessments in the future. To this end, Dire Dawa University plans to regularly conduct this risk assessment survey using this model every two years. Experts at Dire Dawa University and Dire Dawa Regional Health Bureau also conducted the same risk assessment at Dire Dawa High School based on the recommendation and findings of this study.

The results of the survey were used by both the University and the Regional Health Bureau in evidence-based planning and decision making. University leadership were motivated, upon receiving the assessment results, and committed to allocating resources and improving their oversight of HIV interventions at the university and in the community. The National HEI Forum, and other universities in Ethiopia, received the results so that the same survey may be conducted in other universities and may contribute to evidence based planning and response.

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Study orientation in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

