Chilean University Students: Knowledge and Concern About HIV/AIDS

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Abstract

According to a 2004 report by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Chile has an incipient HIV/AIDS epidemic. Regardless of the classification, every year the cumulative incidence of HIV/AIDS increases. Young Chileans have been the most affected group; still, their knowledge, attitudes, and concerns about HIV/AIDS are not known. This study describes Chilean university students’ HIV/AIDS-related knowledge, their worry about getting the virus, and the correlation between both variables. A convenience sample of 45 university students responded to an anonymous self-administered questionnaire after orally consenting to participate in this study. Overall, students had good levels of HIV/AIDS-related knowledge, with 77% responding correctly to at least 85% of the questions. Despite this knowledge, almost 56% of students stated that they were not worried about getting HIV/AIDS. The situation was corroborated by a nonsignificant statistical correlation between both variables (p > .05). These results are congruent with literature from other countries and strengthen the need for further research to clarify why university students, the majority of whom are well-educated and engage in behaviors that place them at risk for contracting the virus, do not worry about HIV.

Key words: HIV/AIDS, knowledge, personal concern, Chile, university students