

The Strategies of AIDS Health Education in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Since its discovery, AIDS has seriously threaten human health, economic development and social security. Undergraduates students in China, one focus of AIDS prevention and treatment, are at high risk of HIV infection. Their knowledge of AIDS, attitude toward the disease and behavior are closely related to the epidemiological trend of AIDS in China. In view of this, this paper discusses the health education strategies on AIDS in colleges and universities, with a view to providing the relevant work references.

Keywords: undergraduate students, AIDS, health education, strategies.

Published Date: January 2018

Published Online: 31st January 2018

1 The introduction of AIDS and its epidemiological trend

AIDS (Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, AIDS), whose full name is translated as “获得性免疫缺陷综合征” in Chinese, and as “艾滋病” for its abbreviation through transliteration. It has been proved to be a kind of new independent disease of the human immunodeficiency virus, which is one of the most serious social problems in the century. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the pathogen that causes AIDS, which is mainly transmitted through sexual contact or blood, blood products and mother-to-child transmission. It specifically invade the helper T cells (CD4 cells), causing severe human cellular immune deficiencies, leading to persistent opportunistic infections, malignancies and neurological impairment^[1].

In China, there are about 840,000 people who have infected by HIV, of whom, about 80,000 are AIDS patients. As a main transmission route of AIDS,

infection through sexual contact is more common in youth. According to the statistics of 2011--2015 year, the annual growth rate of young people from 15 to 24 years old who are infected with the HIV virus reaches 35%^[2]. On the basis of experience gained from actual work, this paper will focus on the problem of health education related to AIDS in Chinese colleges and universities.

2 Challenges in the education of preventing AIDS in colleges and universities

2.1 School administration at all levels lacks due attention

According to the latest statistics, undergraduate students in China have now become an important part of the new HIV infections^[3]. However, administrative departments in many schools still keep their old awareness and beliefs about AIDS that “AIDS is just a problem for drug users.” “No Prostitution, No AIDS” “Using blood products from formal channels can avoid AIDS”. This lack of rightful awareness on AIDS directly leads to a negative situation for AIDS prevention, for administrative departments do not pay enough attention on it, which will indulge the prevalence of AIDS among undergraduate students.

2.2 Undergraduate students generally lack the knowledge of AIDS prevention and control

Under the influence of traditional thought, Chinese people think that "sex" is the most secretive topic which people are too shy to talk about, so they generally try to avoid all information and contents

concerning "sex" in public places. In this way, one of the most direct consequences is that most undergraduate students lack sex education as well as the knowledge of the prevention and treatment of sex related disease, such as AIDS. According to a survey of university students' AIDS knowledge in China, only 71.5% of college students know that only one partner can reduce the risk of HIV infection; 70.8% know that AIDS patients can not be distinguished from the normal from their appearance; 38.8% of them mistakenly believe that mosquito bites can spread the HIV virus. The survey also shows that: 66.8% college students' knowledge of AIDS and sex is acquired from the Internet, which accounts for larger shares than students who know these from their parents and schools. What's more, family even belongs to the factor that hinders their learning. In addition, it is particularly important to note that medical students, as the most knowledgeable people in medicine compared with other students, just command 81.2% of the whole knowledge of HIV / AIDS, thus, it is not difficult to understand that the ratio of art students who are the least knowledgeable people in this aspect, is just 69.7% [4]. At the same time, another survey shows that the ratio is just 57.7% for Chinese medicine students in some medical colleges [5]. From all the above statistics, we can see that it's common for Chinese college students lacking correct understanding and awareness of HIV / AIDS.

2.3 The quality of AIDS health education teachers is uneven, and the absolute quantity is difficult to meet the actual needs

Generally, Chinese universities have specialized teachers for health education, but without specialized training for AIDS education, resulting in different teaching quality. The quality and effects of their education are hard to evaluated without standardized evaluation methods. In addition, many teachers are not full-time health education teachers, they need to undertake a number of tasks at the same time. Therefore, the limited teaching resources have to be allocated to different fields, resulting in a marked shortage of teachers engaged in specialized

AIDS health education. So the actual needs of college students can not be met and failing to achieve an ideal effect [6].

3 HIV/AIDS prevention mechanism in colleges and universities in China

3.1 National policy support

Since China reported AIDS cases in 1985 for the first time, our government has attached great importance to the prevention and treatment of AIDS and successively issued a series of policy documents, of which, the "Medium and Long-Term Plan for AIDS Prevention and Control in China (1998-2010)" issued by the State Council in 1998 became a guideline of vital significance. This plan put forward specific targets for health education of AIDS prevention in schools, urged schools to put the health education on AIDS prevention into important agenda and to strengthen their leadership and overall plan. In 2004, Ministry of Education fully implemented "the State Council's Notice of Strengthening AIDS Prevention", and further emphasized the importance of building a complete AIDS prevention mechanism in all colleges and universities. At the beginning of 2006, the State Council re-enacted "The Action Plan of China Containment and Prevention of AIDS (2006-2010)", which further deployed concrete work indicators, action measures and safeguards to strengthen the health education of AIDS prevention at all levels of schools and served as a strong supporter to continuously improve AIDS prevention in universities and colleges.

On February 5, 2017, in order to implement the "Outline of a Healthy China 2030" and deepen the reform of the medical and health system, the General Office of the State Council formulated and promulgated the "The Thirteen Five-year Action Plan on China's Containment and Prevention of AIDS" to further promote AIDS prevention and treatment and safeguard the public's health, in which the specific planning and deployment of how to effectively carry out AIDS prevention and control on university campuses was conducted.

3.2 Establishing AIDS prevention mechanism in

colleges and universities

First, set up a “AIDS Prevention and Control Leading Group in Colleges and Universities”, which is headed by school leaders and made up of leaders from other relevant departments including the health and epidemic prevention departments, in order to formulate “Medium and Long-term Plan for AIDS Prevention and Control” in their school and examine “Annual Plan for AIDS Prevention and Control” formulated by school’s epidemic prevention department; Second, formulate corresponding supporting policies, encourage the vast number of teachers and students to actively participate in health education activities on AIDS relying on the support from all sectors of the community. Schools should put the prevention and control of AIDS health education into daily teaching plan to ensure colleges and universities carry out long-term scientific and standardized AIDS health education; Third, strengthen contact with the local CDC to make AIDS prevention work in colleges and universities get their help and support for a long time. Always control epidemic situation of AIDS in school, strictly observe report system of epidemic disease.

4 Strategies and Suggestions on AIDS Health Education in Colleges and Universities

4.1 To step up its paces to implement the existing series of laws and regulations on AIDS prevention and control

China has enacted the “AIDS Prevention and Control Regulations” for nearly 12 years, the State Council and its administrative departments have promulgated a series of laws and regulations on AIDS prevention and control, including the new “Thirteen-Five action plan” in 2017. All of these laws and regulations have achieved remarkable progress. But we should also know that in a new era with new circumstances, the existing system and working methods need to keep up with the development of the time. Legal provisions should be brought down to practical work. For example, all kinds of laws and regulations have mentioned the health education of AIDS prevention and treatment, but according to a

series of domestic researches, we will find that there is a huge gap between the real effects achieved by present health education and the ideal effects. For instance, “Thirteen-Five action plan” explicitly suggests that in 2020 the ratio of college students’ comprehensive awareness of AIDS should reach 90%, while some medical schools are only reaching 57.7% now [5]. Therefore, how to turn the responsibility prescribed by law into a concrete indicator and task of quantifiable assessment will be an important part of AIDS prevention and control in the next phase.

4.2 Strengthen the organization and leadership to establish a unified and coordinated new mode of health education on AIDS prevention and control in colleges and universities

A basic fact that can not be avoided is that undergraduates are in an active and mature period of sex with obvious sexual impulsiveness, and they are curious about the unknown. Moreover, without the strict supervision from their parents and school in middle school, students undergo a great change and adaptation in both psychology and physiology once entering university with a relaxed and tolerant environment. Coupled with the impact of Chinese and foreign thoughts and social environment, if university students do not receive a correct and effective health education, they may have impulsive sexual behavior, especially the kind without protective measures, which undoubtedly provides a social and physiological basis for the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in this population. At present, the increase of HIV infection rate of Chinese university students shows the seriousness and urgency of this problem. According to relative survey, 59.5% of college students accepted premarital sex, 15.8% of male students had occasional commercial sex, and 14.2% of female college students could have sex with others for economic reasons [7].

4.3 Understand the persistence and firmness of health education for college students in AIDS prevention and control

Up to now, human beings have not invented

effective vaccines against AIDS and radical treatment, so health education is considered as the most effective methods of AIDS prevention and control [8]. Since it is a kind of education, according to the education concept of "ten years of raising trees and hundred years for educating people", we can see that AIDS health education is bound to be a long and arduous process. The contradiction between them is more prominent in the time of lacking useful sex education and right sexual concept. As mentioned above, carrying out this work in colleges and universities requires administrative agencies to recognize the seriousness and urgency of AIDS first and then make corresponding adjustments and arrangements of school works. The teachers who are engaged in health education need to strengthen their own learning and raise their awareness of the problem. When they carry out health education, they should pay attention to the characteristics of college students. We must abandon the simple dogma beforehand and work according to local conditions and individual characteristics. And this will be the focus in the following elaboration.

4.4 Carry out the work of AIDS health education in many levels

4.4.1 Holding General Course and lectures delivered by experts

At present, although college students do not have enough awareness of AIDS and its prevention, they are young and full of vitality with strong curiosity. A number of studies have found that compulsory courses and expert seminars are still the most popular and accepted form of AIDS health education [2][9][10]. In real practice, we can find that the situation of compulsory course in different areas varies a lot. In short, the situation in large and medium-sized cities and universities are generally better than that in small cities and underdeveloped areas. But there are exceptions, such as Yunnan, a place with severe drug problem and AIDS epidemic situation, its health education is significantly better than general regions and colleges [9][11]. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that there are still a considerable number of university students access AIDS

information through the network [12], but the problem is that the information on the Internet is a mixed bag, the correctness and reliability of information is hard to say. So the compulsory courses and special lectures are still an indispensable means of education, and to a certain extent, can ensure the relevance and individual specificity [13].

4.4.2 Necessity of innovation in the forms and contents of AIDS health education in colleges and universities

Under the background of our time, the necessity of innovation in all fields is undoubted. Therefore, it is necessary to make exploration and innovation on the basis of the successful experience of AIDS prevention and control. For example, a medical school in Xi'an, China, has tried to set up a counseling clinic named "health Cabin" where students in universities can receive counseling and testing on AIDS. This form of health education is a creation in China and has the following characteristics: First, different from the previous large-scale education, the whole counseling and testing here is "one to one", student's privacy can be protected to a maximize degree, staffs try their best to dispel student concerns and promote students especially encourage them to have counselling or even examine after high risk behavior. Second, previous health education on campus only focused on disease counseling and neglected testing which is more crucial. However, the detection of HIV-infected people is exactly the core in the prevention and treatment of AIDS in the whole society. Third, strong accessibility. Since the "Health Cabin" is set up inside the school hospital, it is very convenient for students to seek consultation without the inconvenience of remote distance. Finally, with clear target. According to different circumstances of each student, doctors make appropriate and timely diagnosis to help students at the extreme.

5 Conclusion

This shows that it has a long way to go in order to do a good job of health education of AIDS prevention in colleges and universities. We must know clearly that the arduous task takes long time. And

comprehensive involvement of school management requires a highly co-ordination work. What is more important to note is that we should draw on collective wisdom, broaden our thinking and make innovation in this area instead of over-reliance on existing achievements. Although the “health cabin” project described in this paper is still under exploration, this useful attempt is still worth approving.

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