

Using the cross sectional survey design to determine knowledge levels in ways of preventing HIV, rejecting major misconceptions and the correct steps on condom use in Uganda

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Despite national surveys in behaviour change communication for HIV prevention, comprehensive knowledge about HIV transmission and prevention remains very low in Uganda. Whereas previous studies such as, the 2011 Uganda AIDS Indicator Survey, the 2006 Uganda Demographic Health Survey and the 2005/6 Uganda HIV/AIDS Sero-behavioural Survey identify populations with low knowledge on the correct ways of transmission and preventing HIV, they neither explain the design for determining the factors influencing low levels of comprehensive knowledge nor offer proposals for addressing low comprehensive knowledge among populations aged 15 – 54 years. To fill this gap, a cross-sectional study was conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods used concurrently involving use of interviewer-administered structured questionnaires, and focus group discussions assessing the factors influencing knowledge related to HIV and AIDS. The results from study revealed that 96.4% are able to correctly mention ways through which HIV can be transmitted. Majority also mention condoms (71.3%) and Prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) 84.8% among other prevention ways. Significant proportions among them also answer positively to HIV transmission ways that are misconceived such as mosquitoes (35.1%), sharing utensils (18.9%) or food (10.1). Therefore, raising comprehensive knowledge about HIV requires well-coordinated continuous and regular appropriate methods. Despite the acknowledged limitations of cross sectional survey design, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative survey method and complete case analysis in determining knowledge levels established well represented findings to better inform this study.