

# **AWARENESS OF HIV/AIDS AMONGST MALDIVIAN ADOLESCENTS**

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to determine the level of HIV/AIDS awareness among the adolescent students currently studying in Ahmadhiyya School, Male', Maldives. A descriptive study was conducted among the students of Ahmadhiyya School. All students who were willing to participate (n= 305) were included in the study regardless of their stream of study. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 16 for windows. Data indicates that HIV/AIDS knowledge among the respondents were moderate. Majority of the students were able to identify common modes of transmissions, but few were aware of possibility of other modes of transmissions such as body piercing, breast-feeding from an infected mother, and they incorrectly believe that HIV is transmitted through mosquito bites. Overall, all respondents had a positive attitude towards HIV/AIDS. However, there were hints of possible prejudice and stigmatizing attitudes. Majority of the participants had a low perceived risk perception despite the growing risk environment in Maldives. Health team followed by friends was identified as the top information source while parents were least favored. Though Maldivian adolescents had moderate levels of knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS, there is still room for improvement as there are some considerable amount of knowledge gap that needs to be addressed. This shows that there is growing need for HIV awareness activities aimed at this target population and the need for nurses in public health promotion.