

FEATURE ARTICLE

HIV Knowledge and Risk Factors among Female College Students at Five Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Alabama A&M, Benedict College, Fayetteville State University, Morgan State University, Southern University and A&M College

By: Sandra C. Brown, DNS, APRN, FNP-BC, Shirley F. Wade, MSN, APRN, FNP-BC, Trina Scott, BA & Amy Dellinger, PhD

Abstract

To explore what demographic characteristics and risk markers among college age African American females are associated with HIV knowledge and to examine the differences (based on geographic location) between demographic characteristics, risk markers, and HIV knowledge, a sample of college women from five HBCU sites across the United States submitted pencil-and-paper surveys for analyses. The study population consisted of 707 African American females between the ages of 18 and 24 years of age. The HIV Knowledge Questionnaire (Carey & Schroder, 2003) was used to measure HIV knowledge. A demographic questionnaire was used to assess characteristics of the sample and risk markers. Analyses of responses detailed the following regarding risk markers, 33% (n=233) had unprotected vaginal sex in the past 3 months; 72% (n=509) had previous HIV testing; and 70% (n=495) had 1 to 2 partners in the past year. Regarding HIV knowledge, the average number of correct items ranged from 68.3% to 81.1%. The correlation between age and HIV knowledge score was weak, but statistically significant ($r=0.208$, $p=0.000$). A statistically significant relationship was identified between HIV Knowledge score and condom use ($r=0.131$, $p=.002$) and between HIV knowledge score and HIV testing status ($r=0.098$, $p=0.019$). Findings from this study are consistent with previous studies. College students continue to have multiple sex partners and use condoms inconsistently. Although college students are knowledgeable about HIV transmission, their knowledge does not impact condom use. Finding better methods to communicate HIV/AIDS risk knowledge to college students is paramount in the fight against this deadly scourge.

Acknowledgement: This project was funded by Young Women of Color Initiatives at Advocates for Youth, CDC, Washington D.C.

Suggested Citation:

Brown, Sandra C, Wade, Shirley F, Scott, Trina & Dellinger, Amy, "HIV Knowledge and Risk Factors among Female College Students at Five Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs): Alabama A&M, Benedict College, Fayetteville State University, Morgan State University, Southern University and A&M College, International Journal of Ethnic College Health, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 3-6.