

Keynote speech 4: Knowledge of HIV/AIDS and Its Association with Sexual Risk Behaviour among Low Income Adults in Kuala Lumpur

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"Main Message: Although, low income urban population possessed fairly well knowledge of HIV/AIDS, about 9% of study population had never heard of HIV/AIDS. The knowledge of HIV/AIDS would subsequently affect the sexual risk behaviour. This finding is very worrisome and underlines the immediate

need to improve health education programme effectively which should be targeted to vulnerable population with low socio-economic status who are more likely to practice sexual risk behaviour and high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES: To determine the level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its association with sexual risk behaviour in adults of low socioeconomic status in urban area.

METHODS: Using simple random sampling method, 833 households were selected from Community Housing Projects located in Kuala Lumpur. 2044 adults between 18 and 59 years were recruited for HIV knowledge and sexual risk behaviour survey. The analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to assess the associations between demographic characteristics and socioeconomic status and knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Binary logistic regression

was used to identify the significance of knowledge of HIV/AIDS, and demographic and socioeconomic status on cumulative sexual risk behaviour.

RESULTS: About 8.7% of study participants never heard of HIV/AIDS. However, over all knowledge score of HIV/AIDS was fairly well (mean: 7.72 ± 2.12). Lowest knowledge score was among participants with no education (mean: 5.70; 95% Confidence Interval [CI]: 5.05 - 6.35). ANCOVA showed that the knowledge of HIV/AIDS differs significantly among gender, ethnicity, marital status, education level and occupational status. Only knowledge of HIV/AIDS and occupational status significantly determined the sexual risk behaviour. Each unit rise of knowledge of HIV/AIDS, the sexual risk behaviour would reduce by 9% (Odds Ratio [OR] = 0.91; CI: 0.83 - 1.00).

CONCLUSIONS: Knowledge of HIV/AIDS among adults of urban population is moderate. People from different demographic characteristics and socioeconomic status had different levels of knowledge of HIV/AIDS which subsequently affects the sexual risk behaviour. There is still substantial need to raise the awareness about HIV/AIDS and sexual risk behavior particularly for people with low socio-economic position.

KEYWORDS: Social determinants of Health; Knowledge of HIV/AIDS; Sexual risk behaviour; Malaysia