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HIV/AIDS Awareness and the Level of Sexual Risk Behaviors Among Senior High School Students: An Evaluation

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Abstract
Purpose: The study primarily aimed to assess the level of Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and their sexual risk behaviors in the division of General Santos City and to find out if there is a significant relationship between the two variables.
Research methodology: The research combines qualitative and quantitative methods to explore different phenomena in every aspect of this timely and relevant social issue today- HIV and AIDS. The statistical measure used to test the hypothesis were the Average Percentage, Mean, Z- test, and Pearson Product-moment Correlation.
Results: Findings revealed that awareness of HIV/ AIDS was Fair for both male and female students. Although their level of sexual risk behaviors was Very Low, still it posed a great threat to spreading the virus, especially to male students who are likely to indulge in risky sexual activities compared to female students.
Limitations: This study was limited to the five (5) mega public secondary schools in the division of General Santos City. Variables under investigation were delimited, for awareness of HIV/AIDS focuses only on the transmission myth, attitude, and facts. On the other hand, the sexual risk behaviors variables revolved only around the influence of social media, peer influence, the influence of video content materials, non-self-protection efficacy, and influence of substance use.
Contribution: The study will expose the present condition of the youth's sexual risk behaviors and their awareness of HIV/AIDS which will be the basis for program implementation and policies to contain the spread of the virus.
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1. Introduction

In the new millennium, sexually transmitted illnesses have emerged as the most dangerous threat to public health, human rights, and development (UNAIDS, 2002). Many adolescents around the world are sexually active, and because many of their sexual contacts are not protected, they are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), such as the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), which weaken the immune system and make the person vulnerable to other infections and/or diseases, both of which are major concerns in today's world.

Historically, the knowledge of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) has been very low, even in communities where there is a high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections. Sometimes, these

infections can be considered inevitable (Anwar et al., 2010) or they can also be considered an initiation into adulthood and are believed to be easily curable (Kamarudin, 2003).

In the Philippines, the Department of Health (DOH) has recorded more than 1,200 cases of HIV-infected persons recently diagnosed in January 2019 (Department of Health, Philippines, 2019). According to the Department of Health, 1,098 new HIV-positive persons were registered in the Philippines' HIV/AIDS ART Registry (HARP) in 2017. This was a 48 percent increase over the previous year, and it was also the highest since 1984. There were 1,249 newly confirmed HIV-positive persons reported in January 2019 (Ibid). Out of the data, 16 percent of those with advanced HIV infection exhibited clinical symptoms. Among the data supplied, 32 percent of confirmed HIV/AIDS diagnoses occurred in those aged 15 to 24.

In South Cotabato, there were 134 secondary students registered as HIV/AIDS cases since 2018, which is 7% higher than the previous year. As enunciated by the former Governor of South Cotabato, Daisy Avance Fuentes during an interview, she stated: " knowing that there have been incidences involving younger age groups, particularly high school students, is heartbreaking" (Mindanao News, HIV Spread among High School Students in South Cotabato Alarms Execs, retrieved June 03, 2019).

Among young individuals, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is spreading quickly due to insufficient mental, physical, and social development. The initial phase of youth for high school students is a vulnerable age (Sriram and Raj, 2014). Their lack of psychological development at this time and peer pressure results in their undertaking risky behaviors that render them more exposed to HIV/AIDS.

Because children are such a precious resource for a country's future, they must receive the knowledge they need to safeguard themselves and their peers from becoming victims of this still-incurable disease. Therefore, the study will focus on obtaining information on HIV/AIDS awareness among high school students who at their age are vulnerable to this transmittable disease. Additionally, this study will also look into the level of students' sexual risk behaviors in the division of General Santos City, in the school year 2019-2020.

Research questions

1. What is the level of Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS in terms of:
   1.1 Transmission Myth;
   1.2 Attitude; and
   1.3 Facts?
2. What is the level of Senior High School students' sexual risk behaviors based on:
   1.1 Influence of Social Media;
   1.2 Peer Influence;
   1.3 Influence of Video Content Materials;
   1.4 Non-self-protection efficacy; and
   1.5 Influence of substance use?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of students' awareness of HIV/AIDS between males and females?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of students' sexual risk behaviors between males and females?
5. Is there a significant relationship between Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and the level of their sexual risk behavior?

Aim and objectives

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between Senior High School Students' Awareness of HIV/AIDS and their level of sexual risk behaviors in the division of General Santos City.

1. investigate the level of Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS.
2. investigate the level of Senior High School students' sexual risk behaviors.
3. find out the significant difference in the level of students' awareness of HIV/AIDS between males and females.

4. find out the significant difference in the level of students' sexual risk behaviors between males and females.
5. find out the significant relationship between Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and the level of their sexual risk behaviors.

Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the level of students' awareness of HIV/AIDS between males and females.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of students' sexual risk behaviors between males and females.
3. There is no significant relationship between Seniors High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and the level of their sexual risk behaviors.

2. Literature Review

The HIV / AIDS Situation in the Philippines

Researchers have learned a great deal about the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the illness that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in recent decades (AIDS). However, additional research is required to assist the millions of people whose health is still being jeopardized by the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The Philippines' response to HIV and AIDS has reached a crucial point. The increasing HIV infection rate in the country poses a severe threat to Millennium Development Goal 6, which seeks to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2015. According to a 2012 UNAIDS assessment of the global AIDS pandemic, the Philippines is one of nine countries worldwide where HIV prevalence has increased by more than 25% since 2001. Despite the worldwide AIDS epidemic's declining trend, the Philippines continues to see accelerated growth in new HIV infections. According to statistics from the Department of Health's National Registry of HIV and AIDS, new cases of HIV are increasing at an exponential rate throughout the country, with more than half of all infections occurring in the previous three years. The frequency of HIV reported has climbed from one every three days in 2000 to one per three hours in 2012. This has put the nation among the nine countries in the world with a rise in HIV incidence of more than 25% since 2001. (UNAIDS Report on the global AIDS epidemic, 2012).

The epidemic's growth trajectory is unsurprising, given that the program's coverage is inadequate for groups at higher risk. With an 80 percent national aim for universal access to preventative coverage, the country has fallen short, with rates varying from 5% to 63 percent depending on the demographic, with injectable drug users and men who have sex with males at the bottom of the spectrum (Progress Report for the country of the Philippines, 2012, Report on the progress of the global response to AIDS). In 2009, comprehensive behavioral and serological surveillance found that just 32% of the population at risk knew about HIV and AIDS, considerably below the national objective of 80%.

Furthermore, an examination of the country's AIDS response and issues indicates flaws in the quality of the information and services supplied. As a result, a lack of awareness and access to services, as well as the ongoing stigmatization of AIDS and the prejudice that PLHIV face, has resulted in limited dissemination of services by those who are more at risk, vulnerable, and living with HIV (Ibid).

HIV/AIDS among Adolescence

HIV/AIDS is one of the most pressing public health issues confronting both developing and industrialized countries. Although HIV affects people from all walks of life, the epidemic among teens is the fastest rising, owing to their vulnerability and limited utilization of preventative measures (Kirby, Lepore, & Ryan, 2005). Despite this, teenagers are viewed as a "window of hope" because of their ability to modify their thoughts and behaviors.

Focusing on young people is arguably the most effective way to combat the epidemic, especially in nations with high incidences. This was recognized by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, which approved setting national targets with specific deadlines to achieve the internationally agreed prevention goal of reducing HIV prevalence among young men and women aged 15 to 24 years in the most affected countries by 25% and 25% globally.

Concerns about teenagers being exposed to HIV through sexual conduct have grown significantly in recent years. AIDS is now the sixth leading cause of mortality among young people aged 15 to 24 (Nwankwo, 2008). AIDS affects 20% of people between the ages of 15 and 20. (The UNAIDS Reference Group on Estimates, Models and Projections, 2002). Given HIV's extended latency, many of these persons were most likely introduced during their teens. These high rates of STDs and unintended pregnancies among teenagers indicate that they engage in activities that put them at risk for AIDS, as well as other sexually transmitted illnesses and unintended pregnancies. Revaluation of sexually transmitted illnesses is particularly high among incarcerated teenagers, according to Sriram & Raj (2014).

Sexual Risk Behaviors

More than half of the world's population is under the age of 25, with the bulk of these individuals living in underdeveloped nations like the Philippines. Because of their risk-taking conduct, these young individuals are in danger of engaging in high-risk sexual practices. These high-risk sexual activities put teenagers at risk for a variety of sexual and reproductive health issues, including STIs, HIV, and AIDS.

Risky sexual habits such as unprotected sexual intercourse and early sexual beginning are on the rise in emerging countries (Yi, S., Poudel, K. C., Yasuoka, J., Palmer, P. H., Yi, S., & Jimba, M., 2010). According to studies, young people aged 5 to 24 account for more than half of all new sexually transmitted illnesses (STDs) each year (Panchaud, Singh, Feivelson, & Darroch, 2000). Smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, using drugs, and gender-based violence are all high-risk behaviors that can lead to sexual risk behaviors in young people. Adolescence is a period of development connected with increased risk-taking behaviors that lead to poor sexual health outcomes (Ibid). The variables that predict or co-vary with the occurrence of teenage hazardous behaviors are the focus of most of the study. Risk factors are variables that raise the possibility of a bad result, such as risky teenage behavior in this situation.

Risky sexual behaviors increase an individual's susceptibility to problems with sexuality and reproductive health, as well as the likelihood of negative health consequences associated with sexual contacts, such as HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), abortion, and unplanned pregnancy (World Health Organization, 2015). This study, however, solely looked into HIV/AIDS-related hazardous sexual practices.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the five (5) mega public secondary schools in the division of General Santos City, comprises of General Santos City National High School, Lagao National High School, Labangal National High School, Fatima National High School, and Irineo L. Santiago National High School of Metro Dadiangas. For a clearer view of the locale of the study, the location map is presented in Figure 1.

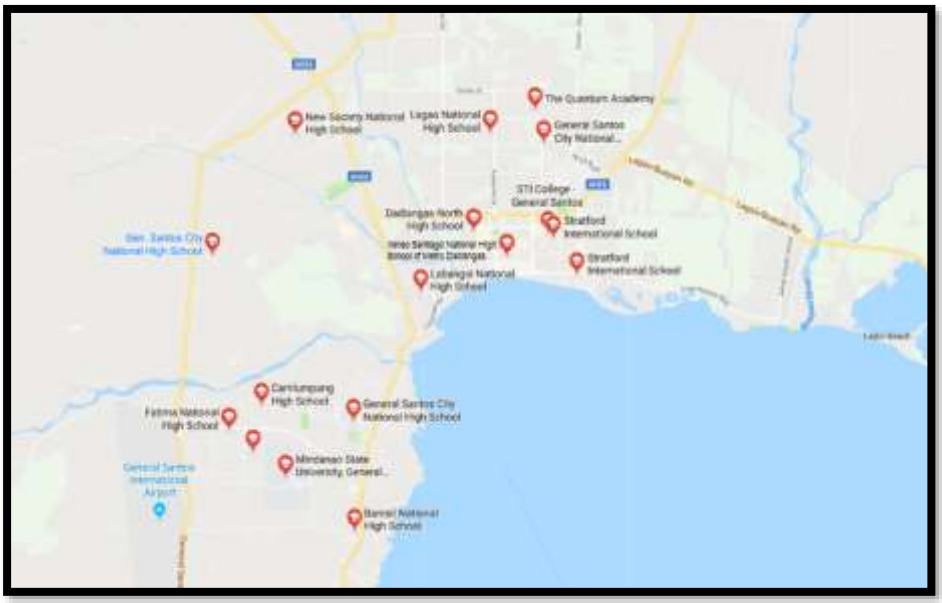

Figure 1. Location Map of Public Secondary Schools in General Santos City

3. Research Methodology

Methods and materials

The study employed a triangulation design of research, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods of research which looked into the present condition on the learners' awareness of HIV/AIDS and their level of risky sexual behaviors which is a very significant and relevant social issue and/ or problem the world is facing in particular, the Philippines, in today's generation.

This mixed-method design of qualitative and quantitative research provided not just a multidimensional view of the phenomena (Foster, 1997), but also rich and impartial data that could be understood with confidence (Breitmayer, Ayres, and Knafl, 1993; Jick, 1979). As a result, the triangulation design ensures internal and external strengths, validity and reliability, a complete multidisciplinary vision (Boyd, 2000), and procedures to reduce potential biases within the research (Mitchell, 1986; Shih, 1998), as well as a way to improve the study's validity, strength, and interpretative potential, reduce researcher biases, and provide more analyses (Denzin, 1970). The researcher employed a triangulation methodology, more specifically, a methodological triangulation method.

The methodological triangulation used by the researcher combines multiple methods to collect data such as documents, interviews, focus group discussions, observations, questionnaires, and surveys to gather data on HIV/AIDS awareness among Senior High School students and the level of their risky sexual behaviors provide a richer and more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

Respondents of the study

Respondents of the study were Senior High School students in five (5) mega public secondary schools in this Division of General Santos City namely General Santos City National High School, Lagao National High School, Labangal National High School, Fatima National High School, and Irineo L. Santiago National High School of Metro Dadiangas. The researcher chose Senior High School students ages 16 to 18 years old since this age bracket of learners is more prone to be infected with HIV/AIDS based on the data given by UNICEF (2019). Senior High School students as respondents of the study will be answering the survey questionnaire to assess the level of their awareness of HIV/AIDS and their risky sexual behaviors. There are 378 respondents to be used as a sample size of the study out of the 7,157 total population of Senior High School learners in the entire division of General Santos City through random sampling.

Sampling technique
The study used a random sampling technique. As suggested by L.R. Gay (1996), a small population can be the best sample size for the study using Slovin's formula. Since there was a 6,259 total population of Senior High School students in the division of General Santos City. Using Gay's suggestion, and applying Slovin's formula, the sample size was reduced to only 378 respondents. The sample size per school was proportionally determined based on the total learner population in each school and was selected using random sampling through the fishbowl technique.

Research instrument
Two sources of data were utilized in collecting information for the study. These were the primary and secondary data. Primary data was made up of a survey questionnaire for quantitative variables, while the secondary data came from the Key Informants Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion, Observations, and Documents which were also utilized in this research endeavor.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher adopted the survey questionnaire from the previous study of Davis, Tang, Chan, and Noel (1999) in Part I of the Questionnaire which will measure the level of awareness of Senior High School students on HIV/AIDS. Part II of the questionnaire will be adapted and modified from the previous studies of Asrat, (2014) and Shiferaw, et al (2011), this is to gauge students in Senior High School's risky sexual behavior. The following questionnaires also undergo validation from qualified experts here in General Santos City.

Data gathering procedure
To obtain the necessary data, an adapted survey questionnaire was taken from the study of Davis, Tang, Chan, and Noel (1999) and Asrat, (2014) and Shiferaw, et al (2011), Key Informants Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion, Observations, and Documents will also be used.

Permission from the school principals will also be asked and, upon approval of the request, the survey questionnaire was administered to the respondents. The researcher himself distributed the questionnaires and instructions were given on how to answer them. The nature and purpose of the research were explained too. Immediately after the respondents finished answering, the questionnaires were retrieved by the researcher for statistical analysis.

After having the survey results, Key Informants Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion, as well as informants' observations for qualitative data gathering was employed. Some of the follow-up questions were framed based on the survey results to come up with an in-depth analysis of the situation. The selection of learner respondents was based on random sampling to ensure an equal and independent chance of being selected. The overall 378 total sample populations were utilized in the entire division and distributed proportionally, based on school population, among the five (5) school respondents.

After getting the sample size in every school, the researcher himself again proportionally distributed the desired sample in every Senior High School section in the respondent school. Then, the fishbowl technique was applied in every section in choosing the student respondents for the study. In applying the fishbowl method, the researcher asked all the concerned students per classroom to write down their names on a 1/8 sheet of paper, afterwards the 1/8 sheet of paper with names written down was rolled and placed in a container. The researcher himself drew the proportionally desired number of samples to be utilized.

Statistical treatment
The average Percentage was used to measure the level of Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS in terms of Transmission Myth, Attitude, and Facts. To gauge the level of Senior High School students' sexual risk behaviors, the mean was employed.

Meanwhile, to determine the significant difference between the levels of students' sexual risk behaviors between males and females, the z- test was used. Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to determine the significant relationship between Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and their level of sexual risk behaviors. All tests were done at a 0.05 level of significance.

4. Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the level of Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS?
Sexually transmitted diseases or infections are a huge public health issue that mostly affects young people all over the world, not just in wealthy nations but also in developing countries like the Philippines.

As a result, it is critical to get an understanding of current information concerning sexually transmitted illnesses such as HIV and AIDS among today's youth as they are the most susceptible to contracting such infections due to their lifestyle, irresponsibility, and desire to explore new things and experiences (Bowler, 2010). Despite the transmission myth, students' attitudes and knowledge about HIV/AIDS will assist to limit the risk of infection spread. Table 1 shows the level of students' awareness of HIV/AIDS despite Transmission Myth.

Table 1. Senior High School Students Awareness of HIV/AIDS

Students Awareness	**Average Percentage**	**Interpretation**
Transmission Myth	54.87	Fair
Attitude	55.56	Fair
Facts	53.41	Fair
Overall Percentage Awareness	**54.61**	**Fair**

As evidenced in the responses of learners with an average percentage of 54.87, this indicates that awareness of HIV/AIDS among young people is Fair despite the misconception about the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

The findings of the survey also indicated that some students lacked an understanding of HIV and AIDS in important areas that need to be improved. Education, on the other hand, has been linked to increased knowledge and positive attitudes, suggesting that educational campaigns could help to raise awareness and reduce stigma, if not eliminate, the number of people who believe the virus can be spread through hugging, sharing food, saliva, and mosquito bites.

Research Question 2: What is the level of Senior High School students' sexual risk behaviors?
Sexual behavior at a young age is becoming increasingly common over the world. Premarital sex is prevalent between the ages of 15 and 19 in many nations, and most young people are sexually active before the age of 20 (UNICEF, 2002). Risky sexual practices that result in unsafe sex were ranked second among the top ten risk factors in the global burden of all illnesses caused worldwide by the World Health Organization in 2015. (Harvey and Beckman, 2016). Thus, looking into the level of students' risky sexual behaviors is vital in understanding the present situation of today's youth engaging in these risky activities which eventually, if not addressed, will result in social issues.

The following table will show the risky sexual behaviors of today's young generation under different criteria namely: influence of social media, peer influence, the influence of video content materials, non-self-protection efficacy, and the influence of substance use.

Table 2. Senior High School Students' Sexual Risk Behaviors

Sexual Risk Behaviors	**Mean**	**SD**	**Interpretation**
Influence of Social Media	2.04	0.58	Low
Peer Influence	1.30	0.31	Very Low

Influence of Video Content - Materials	1.65	0.54	Very Low
Non-Self-protection Efficacy	1.78	0.53	Very Low
Influence of Substance Use	1.07	0.14	Very Low
Overall Sexual Risk-Behaviors	**1.57**	**0.35**	**Very Low**

It should be noted, however, that those young people (adolescents) can often be inconsistent in their thoughts and behavior. At this time, vast experimentation and the challenge of concomitant borders flourish. This includes collaboration with new groups of friends, the development of different interests, and the search for new experiences. This evolutionary behavior can be a threat to the health and well-being of today's young generation.

The knowledge of the level of risky behavior, more particularly the risky sexual behavior, of young people is imperative. As magnified in the survey, the overall level of sexual risk behaviors among Senior High School learners is very low with a mean of 1.57.

Even though the table above indicates that learners have relatively low sexual risk behaviors. The findings of this study suggest that social media has a greater influence on learners' risky behaviors (mean 2.04; standard deviation 0.58), followed by their non-self-protection efficacy (1.78; standard deviation 0.53), the influence of video content materials (0.54 standard deviation and 1.65 average mean), 1.30 general mean (SD= 0.31) for peer influence, and substance use (1.07 based on standard deviation 0.14). Due to their notion of personal invulnerability and their inclination to focus on the immediate, rather than long-term, implications of their action, adolescents, like adults, may be prone to dangerous sexual activity.

According to research, individuals who use substances are more likely to become sexually active at a younger age (Madkour, Farhat, Halpern, Godeau, & Gabhainn, 2010), have more sexual partners (Connell, Gilreath, & Hansen, 2009), and have unprotected sex (Tucker et al., 2012), all of which have been linked to an increased risk of sexually transmitted infections.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant difference in the level of students' awareness of HIV/AIDS between males and females?
Awareness of HIV /AIDS is one of the main pillars of the fight against the disease. Young people are more likely to be infected because they participated in risky practices due to a lack of adequate information. Therefore, evaluating the level of awareness among young people will help to assess the present situation regarding learners' knowledge of this pandemic disease- HIV/AIDS. Table 3 shows that there is no substantial difference in student understanding of HIV/AIDS between male and female students. Male students (M= 54.87, SD= 7.13) had similar levels of awareness to female students (M= 54.35, SD= 6.45, z (376) = 0.742, p= 0.229). The findings show that both males and females have the same knowledge of HIV/AIDS in terms of transmission myths, attitudes, and facts.

Table 3. Z-test for the Level of Awareness of HIV/AIDS between Male and Female Senior High School Students

Group	n	Mean	SD	Df	z	P	Interpretation
Male	191	54.87	7.13	376	0.742	0.229	**No Significant Difference**
Female	187	54.35	6.45				

***significant at* $\alpha = .05$**

This study's findings are comparable to those of Andrew, et al. (2018), Haroun, et al. (2016), and Nubed & Akoachere (2016), who found no significant difference in HIV/AIDS awareness between male and female pupils.

Adolescents will be better equipped to make educated decisions regarding HIV prevention measures if they have accurate HIV/AIDS information. A greater understanding of HIV and AIDS does not always lead to positive behavior change, according to research, but knowledge of a disease can be a starting step toward risk behavior change (Bigala, 2014; Omoyeni, 2014). As a result, understanding the disease is required for most students to make behavioral adjustments that will protect them against HIV/AIDS infections.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant difference in the level of students' sexual risk behaviors between males and females?
Young people often have to struggle with their social autonomy, mutual pressure, and lack of effective maturity to make positive sexual decisions, which often lead to negative attitudes and behavior which contribute to their high vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections. HIV and AIDS are not simply a public challenge to health, but constitute a social threat with a devastating impact on young people.

Therefore, the study will examine the sexual risk behaviors between male and female students to figure out whether there are differences in the maintenance of ambivalent sexist beliefs.

Table 4. Z-test for Level of Sexual Risk Behaviors between Male and Female Senior High School Students

Group	N	Mean	SD	Df	z	P	Interpretation
Male	191	1.87	0.14	376	38.41	0.0001	**With Significant Difference**
Female	187	1.25	0.17				

***significant at* $\alpha = .05$**

Table 4 revealed that there is a significant difference in the level of students' sexual risk behaviors between males and females. The male students (*M= 1.87, SD= 0.14*) have significantly higher mean than female students (*M= 1.25, SD= 0.17, z (376) = 38.41, p = 0.0001*). It was found in this study that male students are more inclined to risky sexual behaviors in comparison to female students.

Ana Marie Cang, a licensed nurse in a public hospital in the city of General Santos, confirmed the study's findings, saying that males are more prone to sexual risk-taking than females. Gender disparities tend to be even more prominent when it comes to dangerous sexual activities. The findings of this study were comparable to those of Fetchenhauser and Rohde (2002), who discovered that males are more prone to take risks than females. The other group, for example, featured scales with many parts that linked to most of the items stated in sexual risk behaviors, such as drinking elements. Males with higher mean scores (1.87>1.25) are more likely to engage in risky sexual practices.

According to the poll results, males have a larger chance of contracting HIV than females because they are more likely to take sexual risks. According to the Department of Health (DOH) Central Office National AIDS Data (2019), roughly 65,463 cumulative cases have been registered from 1984 to March 2019, with sexual contact being the most common means of transmission, and males account for 94 percent of the cases. As a result, the potential public health consequences of the study's results are considerable.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and the level of their sexual risk behaviors?
According to the World Health Organization (2019), someone in the world contracts HIV every twelve seconds. If HIV is not adequately treated, it can progress to AIDS and, worse, death. As a result, HIV/AIDS is one of the world's most serious issues. People are aware that HIV is hazardous, but the majority are unaware of what HIV and AIDS are, what causes them, or how to avoid infection. Many organizations in the Philippines currently conduct HIV and AIDS education programs to raise the number of individuals who have enough information and awareness of the disease and, as a result,

lower the number of persons afflicted. Despite these groups' efforts, AIDS remains one of the most frequent sexually transmitted illnesses in the country.

Therefore, looking into the level of awareness of young people about the virus and how it will affect their behavior is the paramount consideration of the study. As viewed in Table 5 the relationship between students' awareness of HIV/AIDS and their level of sexual risk behaviors, shows that there was no significant relationship between the knowledge of HIV and the overall intention to engage in risky sexual behaviors (r= 0.06, p= 0.237). Based on the data, it is concluded that awareness has no impact on the formation of students' behavior particularly in their sexual risky activities.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation of Senior High School Students' Awareness of HIV/AIDS and the Level of their Sexual Risk Behaviors

Variables	Test for Relationship	p	r	Interpretation
Students' Awareness X Students' Sexual Risk Behaviors	**1.399**	**0.237**	**0.06**	**Not Significant**

***significant at* $\alpha = .05$**

Furthermore, there is linearity in the relationship as the scatter diagram shown in Figure 1, but the computed test for the relationship shows no significant relationship (F=1.399, p = .237) thus the null hypothesis was not rejected based on the result that there is no significant relationship between Seniors High School students' awareness on HIV/AIDS and the level of their sexual risk behaviors.

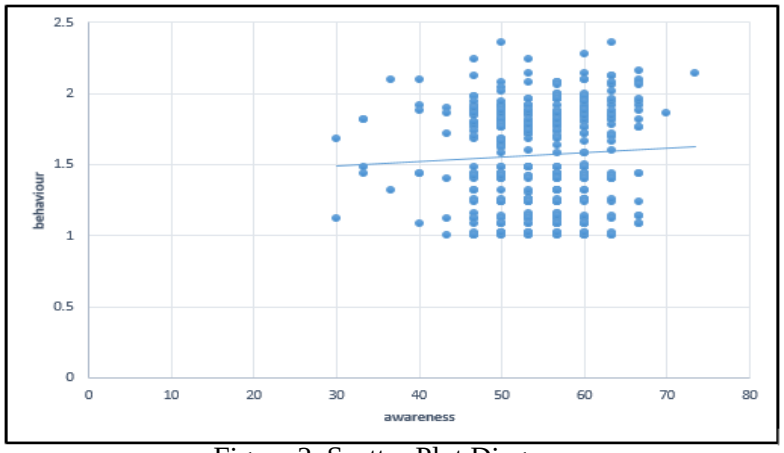

Figure 2. Scatter Plot Diagram

The result further explains that even though there are programs and/or activities in both private and public institutions in spreading awareness about HIV/AIDS, the data reveals the increasing rate of infected individuals (Philippine National AIDS Council, 2018), even with the information dissemination and advocacy intervention in bolstering awareness on every individual, especially, the young people.

Despite efforts to stop HIV and AIDS from spreading, the number of HIV- positive persons continues to rise. The failure of current prevention strategies, which rely more often on spreading awareness through media campaigns such as posting information in prominent places, television advertisements, or social media, indicates that they are less effective in changing behavioral practices in the younger generation (Ana Marie Cang and Washington Loreno, in an interview, 2019).

As health authorities in General Santos have stated, raising knowledge is insufficient in combating HIV/AIDS because it does not affect people's behavior. According to research, individuals' conduct should be given special attention to prevent the rising number of HIV and AIDS cases. According to current case statistics, the rate is rising (Ibid), because most public and private organizations and/or institutions' purpose in these health concerns is to raise awareness about this dangerous virus rather than to influence people's behavior.

Although in the process awareness is important but not enough to modify behavior (Kelly and Barker, 2016) which cannot be formed only by infusing knowledge but needs a lot of effort and time to shape someone's behavior which plays an important role in reducing the rate of contracting the disease. Awareness must be combined with effective techniques in behavioral modification, one of those is education which reinforces behavioral change (Kazdin, 1981).

Furthermore, it is possible to assume that teenagers have not yet assimilated HIV and AIDS information. Apart from raising HIV/AIDS awareness, initiatives to change risk behaviors must remain a top emphasis for HIV prevention.

Summary of findings

This study arrived at the following findings:

1) The level of Senior High School students' awareness of HIV/ AIDS in terms of Transmission Myth has a percentage of 54.87, in the category of Attitude students' awareness has a percentage average of 55.56 and in terms of Facts, the level of student's awareness is 53.41 percentage average and all has an interpretation of Fair. Thus, the average percentage of awareness of HIV and AIDS among Senior High School students is 54.61 viewed as Fair.
2) It was also found that the level of Senior High School students' sexual risk behaviors based on the Influence of Social Media has a mean of 2.04, a standard deviation of 0.58 (Low), as influenced by Peers is M= 1.30, SD 0.31 with an interpretation of Very Low, based on the influence of Video Content Materials is Very Low (M= 1.65, SD= 0.54), as contributed by student's Non-Self-protection Efficacy, the level of their sexual risk behaviors is M= 1.78, SD= 0.53 characterized as Fair influenced and lastly, the influence of Substance Use in the risky sexual behaviors of students is Very Low having a mean of 1.07, standard deviation 0.35. Therefore, the level of Senior High School sexual risky behaviors is Very Low with an overall mean of 1.57 SD= 0.35.
3) The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of students' awareness of HIV/ AIDS between males and females. The awareness of male students (M = 54.87, SD = 7.13) is comparable to female students (M = 54.35, SD = 6.45, z (376) = 0.742, p = 0.229) but there is a significant difference in the level of students' sexual risk behaviors between male and female. The male students (M= 1.87, SD= 0.14) have significantly higher mean than female students (M= 1.25, SD= 0.17, z (376) = 38.41, p = 0.0001).
4) Finally, the study showed that there is no significant relationship between Seniors High School students' awareness of HIV/ AIDS and the level of their sexual risk behaviors (F=1.399, p = .237).

5. Conclusion

HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious health problems that individuals face today, especially young adults. As a result, young people are more likely to participate in sexual behavior while they are younger. As a result, students must be equipped with sufficient and correct knowledge about HIV and AIDS as a first step in battling this societal problem, as they represent the future and the key to successful HIV prevention in our nation's future. Apart from raising awareness, it is also necessary to look at the conduct of young people who may exacerbate the danger of transferring the virus to lower the rising incidence of HIV/AIDS-infected persons.

The study's findings led to the conclusion that raising HIV awareness alone will not result in change, as it has no meaningful association with young people's behavior and is not the sole crucial antecedent to sexual risk behaviors. It was also discovered that a comprehensive solution, most likely behavioral change, is required to minimize the country's escalating prevalence of sexually transmitted illnesses among teenagers. To change someone's risky sexual behavior, awareness of the concerns and problems must be accompanied by an intense program. As a result, accomplishing these objectives necessitates long-term commitment, as well as increased efficiency and effectiveness in all HIV prevention initiatives.

Education, which plays a critical role in behavioral modification, is one strategy to mold learners' positive conduct toward the danger of HIV/AIDS. HIV education programs for teenagers and young adults have a favorable impact on their behavior, which is extremely effective in preventing the transmission of the virus while also being quite encouraging for them. As a result, initiatives that limit hazardous sexual activity and, as a result, the acquisition of sexually transmitted illnesses among young people will be reduced.

Aside from school, family plays a critical role in assisting teenagers in developing skills and strengthening their personalities. The family is the most important source of emotional, financial, and identity support for teenagers, as well as a sense of belonging. Any positive or poor conduct in the family has a direct impact on young adults, who are the foundation of moral ideals. Although teenagers are prone to dangerous activities, parental support may help to mitigate the adolescent's proclivity for high-risk behaviors.

Recommendations

These recommendations are based on the results and conclusions, and they will help lower the risk of HIV and AIDS transmission among young adults, which is one of the most important and major social challenges in the Philippines today. Because behavior is an essential aspect that can help minimize the spread of HIV/AIDS or any sexually transmitted illnesses, awareness must be accompanied by a complete and intense strategy that can lead to behavioral transformation among teenagers.

Continuous training and other programs are required to assist young people to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to reduce infection risk and susceptibility. This preventative approach should be supplemented with a behavioral and structural strategy that can aid in the development of good attitudes and behaviors. Behavioral change requires a lot of education. As a result, sex education must be included in the K–12 curricula as a separate topic rather than an integration. More significantly, instructors must be thoroughly taught and provided with up-to-date resources. Even if instructors nowadays can obtain material from a variety of sources, it may not be age-appropriate or completely accurate. Initiatives must be based on scientific truths and the best data available.

Also, parents should be encouraged to teach their children about sex education and sexuality issues at home, and they should take part in doing so. This allows parents to imprint their family values into their children's sexual perceptions and comprehension. Finally, more research into HIV/AIDS knowledge and risky sexual practices among students is strongly suggested, with a broad scope and factors that may have a substantial link.

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