

UniversiTest: peer to peer approaching. Informing and Testing

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Introduction/Summary

- Sexually transmitted infections is a group of infections transmitted through vaginal, oral anal intercourse. Every day, one million people around the world catch a sexually transmitted infection, an STI, and these number are rising.
- Sex education plays a vital role in the sexual health and well-being of young people. Little is known however, about the effectiveness of efforts beyond sexually transmitted disease prevention. In the last years authors conducted researches on programs to find evidence for the effectiveness of comprehensive sex education.
- Rapid diagnostic test (RDTs) use increased during COVID-19 pandemic. RDTs are essential to confirm a diagnosis-as-treatment/prevention strategy.
- The aim of our study was to evaluate HIV and Syphilis prevalence among university students and investigate young people STI knowledge.

Results

- We enrolled 550 students, 99% agreed to be tested.
- 100% of test resulted negative for both HIV and Syphilis.
- 58% of participants were aged between 21 and 25.
- 61% of subjects were female and 39% male.
- 53% of the male subjects had more than one sexual partner in the last year.
- 42% of subjects have had between 2 and 5 sexual partners in the last year, while 30% have had unprotected sexual intercourse.
- 79% of the students reported that never been tested for STIs, 46% had no knowledge about HIV transmission (Fig. 1) and 71% did not know that HIV treatment is highly effective in reducing the transmission of HIV (U=U) (Fig. 2).

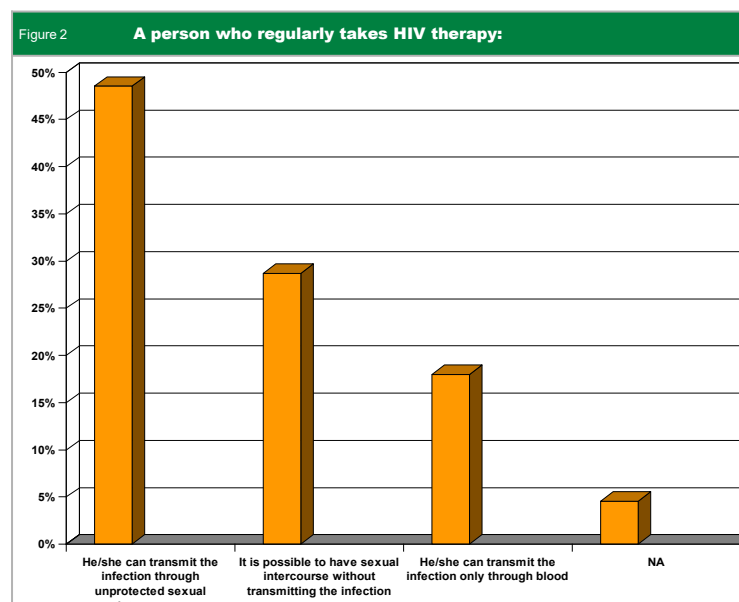
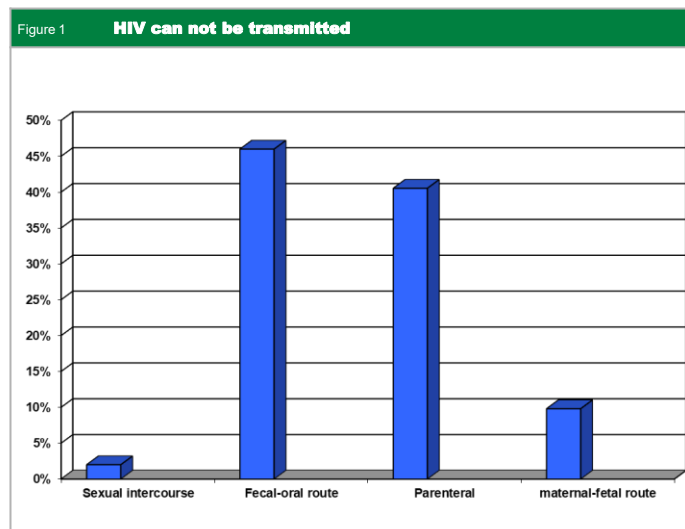


Study Design

- The study was conducted by infectious junior medical doctors who performed rapid tests (Abbott kits Syphilis and HIV antigenic test) and administered anonymous survey about personal sexual behaviour and STI general knowledge.

Methods

- Trasversal observational study performed from November 2022 and still ongoing between University Students of Foggia.
- The data obtained from the questionnaires were collected in dedicated databases.



Conclusions

- A peer-to-peer approach has been effective among University students, encouraging them to participate in the STIs prevention campaign.
- Rapid testing has facilitated screening in a young population.
- Little knowledge about STI transmission underscores the need to implement effective information campaigns among young people on this issue.
- Educating the university population with correct and effective information would contribute to spread awareness about STIs in the entire general population.

