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What is a Primary School Learners' Knowledge and Fears on HIV/AIDS?

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to explore what primary school learners' knowledge and fears of HIV/AIDS were. The researcher surveyed 633 primary school learners from four primary schools in Lenasia (Gauteng, South of Johannesburg). Learners were drawn from Grade 6 (n=292; 46%) and Grade 7 (n=341; 54%). The majority of learners ranged from 11 years to 15 years of age, with a mean age of 12.22 years (*SD* = 0.89). Quantitative methods were employed to analyse the data collected. Most of the assumptions for a parametric test were met, except for the sample distribution, which seemed to have been slightly skewed, i.e. the sample consisted of more Black learners (*n*=407) than Indian learners (*n*=226). Concurring with recent evidence, this study found knowledgeability about AIDS among respondents to be moderately high; however, it was evident that learners held misconceptions concerning HIV/AIDS. The answers provided by learners in this study indicated that the awareness of the severity of the disease was higher amongst Black learners than Indian learners. Those learners who were more knowledgeable about AIDS were not necessarily less fearful of contracting AIDS. The results derived from the two-way ANOVA and regression models indicate that there appears to be a significant gender difference, as more females were worried of getting AIDS than males. These were just some of the main findings of the study. The limitations of the study were also discussed.