

Significant benefit of a targeted HIV testing module on medical students' knowledge and confidence

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Background

- In the UK, approximately one quarter of the HIV positive population are undiagnosed
- In 2008, National HIV testing guidelines were developed by BHIVA, BASHH & BIS
- UCL Medical school introduced a single HIV targeted-testing teaching session for 5th year medical students as part of the genitourinary medicine module

Method

- Questionnaire administered to students who had completed GU training (GU+) and compared with those who hadn't (GU-) assessing:
 - Knowledge of HIV testing guidelines
 - Confidence in how to discuss and when to test
- For GU+ students, we also assessed impact of teaching on confidence in different medical settings

Medical Student Knowledge

Question Topic	% of GU+ Correct	% of GU- Correct
HIV testing in A&E	55.6	59.3
Testing an unconscious pt	89*	57.6
Background prevalence	42.4*	10.1

*statistically significant difference favouring GU+ ($p < 0.001$)

Medical Student Confidence

Question Topic	% of GU+ Yes	% of GU- Yes
Confident on when to test	69.4*	2.6
Confident on how to discuss testing	96.0*	18.0

*statistically significant difference favouring GU+ ($p < 0.001$)

Results

- Most students said they would be happy to offer and conduct HIV testing in a **variety of medical settings**
- **However**, significantly fewer felt happy to offer testing in an acute admissions unit (AAU) compared with an antenatal clinic (79% vs 96%; $p < 0.01$)

Limitations / Further research

- Single time point
- HIV covered in other sessions
- Comparison with other medical school cohorts
- Inclusion of more knowledge questions
- Evaluate the efficacy of different teaching methods
- Other staff groups & durability of impact

Discussion

- Implications on practice of newly qualifying doctors
- Need for increased awareness of HIV testing guidelines in medical school curricula
- Potential need to review post-graduate training, particularly for those at FY1/2 level

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