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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Topic</th>
<th>% of GU+ Correct</th>
<th>% of GU- Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIV testing in A&amp;E</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing an unconscious pt</td>
<td>89*</td>
<td>57.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background prevalence</td>
<td>42.4*</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*statistically significant difference favouring GU+ (p<0.001)
Medical Student Confidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Topic</th>
<th>% of GU+ Yes</th>
<th>% of GU- Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confident on when to test</td>
<td>69.4*</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident on how to discuss testing</td>
<td>96.0*</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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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Participants of the survey

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