

The Impact and Importance of HIV Teaching Sessions for Junior Physicians A Study in a Tertiary Center in Ireland

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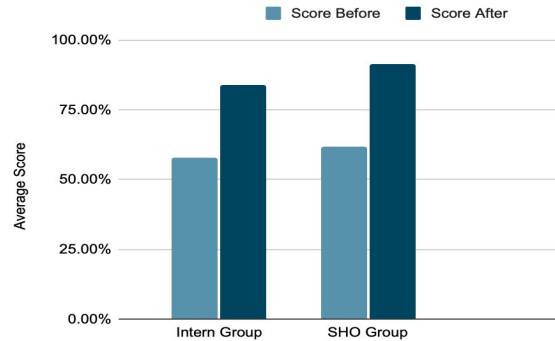
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Aims: Demonstrate the educational benefit of introductory teaching sessions on HIV to junior non-consultant-hospital-doctors (NCHDs) in a tertiary hospital in Ireland. My overall aim was to provide education on the importance of HIV testing, with an emphasis on testing guidelines, indicator conditions, early diagnosis, early treatment and subsequent reduction in HIV onward transmission. This sits on a backdrop of the recently renewed UNAIDS Fast Track targets for 2030 which focus on a global effort to end the HIV epidemic.

Methods: I delivered two hour long teaching sessions. One to the intern group and a second to the SHO group in University Hospital Limerick, Ireland. I asked each group to complete an eighteen question survey prior to the session. Following the session I asked them to repeat the same survey. I compared their scores before and afterwards and noted a significant improvement in scores obtained.

RESULTS



Intern Group: 57.7.% before, 83.9% after. SHO Group: 61.6% before, 91.6% after

Discussion & Conclusion: Despite the progress we have made, HIV and AIDS persist to be a serious public health challenge globally and late diagnosis continues to undermine our advances in the field. The ambitious target of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 will endeavor to close these gaps and focus on a global effort to end the epidemic. [1] [2]

Amidst this renewed global commitment it is a crucial time to refocus, re-engage and re-educate healthcare workers. NCHDs are at the frontline of our health service and are well placed to perform provider-initiated HIV testing. Providing further education to this group may increase our national testing numbers, result in earlier diagnoses, earlier treatment and reduced onward transmission.

This small scale study demonstrates the positive impact of an introductory HIV teaching session for junior physicians. With vast advances in HIV care we have a responsibility to upskill healthcare workers and upscale testing. The trajectory of HIV has changed, as has the demographic of patients living with HIV in Ireland. The ever changing pattern of migration, particularly given current and unfortunate circumstances in Ukraine, and the aging HIV population will see us managing this condition for years to come. This is a drop in the ocean in terms of the global effort to end the epidemic but ongoing medical education is an important part of our contribution.

1. Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations. 2015.
2. Understanding Fast-Track. Accelerating action to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030.