

Title: Medical students as novel partners to promote acceptance of HIV/AIDS by the medical profession

KCW CHAN, VSC KWONG, ICT TSE, SPS WONG, KH WONG

Integrated Treatment Centre, Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health,
Hong Kong SAR

Objectives

In Hong Kong, medical care of HIV/AIDS is carried out by two designated centres, partly as a result of non-acceptance of the general medical profession. Until recently, HIV/AIDS was not an integral part of the medical syllabus and clinical teaching was minimal. On a trial basis, a clinical teaching module of HIV/AIDS with real patients was introduced into the syllabus of final year medical students

Methods

From August 2005 to March 2006, final year medical students spent an afternoon in a designated HIV clinic, sitting in medical consultations and psychological counseling. Standard questionnaires were distributed to both students and patients for evaluation. Focus interviews were also conducted with health care providers.

Results

Altogether, 153 medical students attended the teaching session. Consistently, more than 95% reported satisfaction with the arrangement and experiences. Among comments made, most reflected a desire to deepen an understanding of the psychosocial issues. Counseling was emphasized. Patients generally agreed to see students in the doctors' session, but not counselors' session.

Conclusion

Patients were generally accepting of medical students participating in their medical care, who showed a high degree of compassion. The medical school is an entry point to promote acceptance of HIV/AIDS in the medical profession.

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