

Building connections across care, prevention and education

OC 36 Anlaids School - Through a positive and inclusive view of Sexuality, our STI prevention training

Authors

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ABSTRACT

Background: Since 1993, Anlaids has been committed to creating an open and direct dialogue with male and female students with the aim of providing them with useful tools to learn about and prevent HIV and other STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections). The project is operational thanks to the actions that each Anlaids office carries out in its region.

The educational proposal evolved over time and, consistent with the new national guidelines, reworked in the 2023-2024 school year, has HIV/AIDS/STIs as its focus, but builds and promotes scientifically accurate, age- and developmentally-appropriate, gender-diverse, culturally relevant and transformative knowledge about the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social aspects of sexuality, useful for developing attitudes and behaviors for STI prevention and taking care of one's sexual health.

Material and Methods: The project is aimed at Grade I and II Secondary Schools, and since the current school year it has been experimenting, in several Italian institutions, with the treatment of prevention issues according to the EduForIST model, based on the extensive sex education (CSE) approach. Characteristic of the model is the active involvement of young people through techniques and activations capable of stimulating attention and the cognitive and emotional sphere, thanks to the support of appropriately trained educators with expertise in the field of prevention and sex education.

A questionnaire is administered before and after the interventions. The sum of true answers to questions on HIV/AIDS knowledge and prevention methods total a maximum score of 14 points.

Results: From October 2024 to February 2025, 3,402 post-intervention questionnaires were filled out by about 7,000 students from 77 institutions met by practitioners from 7 ANLAIDS Regional Offices. 76% were trained in the CSE approach. 52.4% are female; median age is 16 (range 13-21). 63.9% come from high schools. 74.7% attend 3rd-4th-5th grade classes.

Those who received the intervention using the CSE approach totaled a higher mean score on the overall scale of true responses than those who received the intervention without a CSE approach ($M = 10.8$ vs 9.5 ; $t = 12.067$ $p < .001$). With respect to perceived usefulness of the intervention ($M = 3.52$ vs 3.46 ; $t = 1.172$ $p = .241$) or thinking that one's prevention behavior might change ($M = 2.78$ vs 2.71 ; $t = 1.156$ $p = .248$) there were no significant differences between the two groups. While the CSE group reports that they are more satisfied with the operators' activities ($M = 3.64$ vs 3.46 ; $t = 3.143$ $p = .002$).

Conclusions: It is shown that activities based on the 'CSE approach are more effective because they stimulate the emotional dimension that facilitates learning. From the positive impact of sex and affective education programs on the health of young people and the desire to fill an educational gap resulting from the absence of regulation, the Anlaids project moves.