

# Improving students' knowledge and attitude with regard to HIV

Dear Sir,

Khorvash *et al.* have reported the results of an insightful study conducted among students of nursing and midwifery school on the association between the students' knowledge and their tendency to take care of HIV patients.<sup>[1]</sup> It is no exaggeration to state that the results are rather worrying. Students had an inadequate knowledge of HIV infection and some were unwilling to care for affected patients. The authors have correctly said that further medical education on this subject is needed; however, it is worth pausing to consider what format would be most appropriate for that learning and how it should be delivered.

The gaps in competencies that need to be filled are largely knowledge and attitudinal or behavioral gaps. With regard to knowledge, it is perhaps unsurprising that some students who had poor knowledge of how HIV is transmitted would be reluctant to care for patients. The converse is also true – students with discriminatory attitudes are less likely to be motivated to learn about the disease. Could a new component of the curriculum address both these issues? A learning resource that is built around a patient's case could perhaps manage to do this. Modern technology (e.g. by means of e-learning) could enable this concept to become a reality. Interactive and multimedia online modules could be built around clinical and ethical dilemmas that relate to the care of patients with HIV. The rapidly falling costs of technology mean that such resources can be built at a fraction of the cost that was needed a number of years ago and that the resources offer real value to learners.<sup>[2,3]</sup>

The resources can feature virtual patients and can enable learners to test and train their applied knowledge and ethical behaviors in a safe online simulated environment.

They can also enable learners to integrate knowledge, skills, and behavioral learning in preparation for clinical practice - when they will have to care of patients in a seamless and integrated manner.

Modern medicine means that we are continually faced with new challenges - however, modern technology means that we continue to have new means to address these challenges - we must now leverage this new technology for the benefit of our learners and ultimately our patients.

Yours Sincerely,

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## REFERENCES

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