



37. WHAT DO STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION? A SURVEY STUDY ABOUT KNOWLEDGE AND SEXUAL RISK BEHAVIOURS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Introduction. Sexual life is of considerable importance, particularly in youngsters, not only because of its Sexual life is extremely important, especially for young people, not just because it affects intellectual development but also because of potential health effects. STIs are among the most prevalent diseases in the world, and unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) rank among the most serious issues globally. Every day around the world, more than 1 million STIs are acquired and every year there are around 500 million new infections, most commonly syphilis, chlamydia, trichomoniasis and gonorrhoea (WHO,2014). Sexual behaviour is the key determinant of STI transmission all over the world. (Fenton, 2004). Adolescents and young adults are at higher risk for such behaviour, frequently as a result of their immature decision making. Additionally, these sexual risk behaviour patterns may persist into adulthood (Epstein et al., 2014).

Aim of study. This study aims to investigate the level of knowledge, perception, sexual risk behaviours and attitudes about sexual matters, among university students. Furthermore, to improve strategies for family planning and sexual health education among youths.

Methods and materials. The study was conducted with an online survey questionnaire. The link was shared with students attending different universities. The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts: the first part includes general information; the second includes questions related to sexual matters; the third aims to assess students' knowledge. The statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software.

Results. The total number of participants was 564. The majority were Romanians, female, Orthodox, 21-25 years old, Caucasian, single and studying at a biomedical university. The most knowledgeable students about sexual matters were Serbians studying in a biomedical faculty. The most commonly used source of information was the Internet-TV (76.80%) while the most commonly used contraceptive method was the condom. Most students never received sexual health education (51.06%), and among those who received it, the majority were Serbians. Regarding FP, the majority would like to have their first child at 26-29 years. Students who were less engaged in sexual risk behaviors were females, Muslims black/African-American with few sexual partners. Students who used the EC pill multiple times were mainly Romanian.

Conclusion. Students who received sexual education were more knowledgeable about sexual matters. Sociodemographic and cultural factors are all aspects that influence sexual risk behaviours. Improvement of students' knowledge, perceptions, and attitudes towards these topics is still needed.