

85 KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE OF HIV/AIDS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AMONG KEY POPULATIONS AT RISK FOR HIV INFECTION IN IRAN

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Background and aims: According to the Ministry of Health and Medical education in Iran, 27000 cases of HIV/AIDS have been registered so far. Given the importance of key groups in the spread of HIV/AIDS alongside the significant role of prevention as the most important approach to tackle this infection, this study was designed to document the current state of the knowledge, attitude and practices of key populations towards HIV/AIDS in Iran.

Methods: In this study, we systematically reviewed the scientific literature up to July 2014 on HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitude and practices. We focused on four key populations including female sex workers, prisoners, and injecting and non-injecting drug users. We searched PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, SID and Iranmedex databases. The search strategy was constructed using “and” and “or” operators and the following keywords: Female Sex Worker, Injecting Drug User, HIV, Prisoners, Drug User, Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Iran. A checklist was designed to assess the internal validity and overall quality of each paper. Two independent reviewers assessed the quality of each paper. In case of disagreement, a third expert-opinion was sought.

Results: A total of 195 studies were retrieved, of which 25 were repetitive and only 8 studies were included in the final review based on their good quality. Due to the diversity of research methodologies and applied tools in existing studies, performing a meta-analysis was not considered feasible. Among included studies, none had evaluated the HIV/AIDS related practice. Mean knowledge score was ranged from 40.29 to 50.6 and the mean attitude score was from 38.3 to 67.5. Moreover, the percentage of those with high level of knowledge varied between 6 and 44.5 and those with a high positive attitude between 7.6 and 38.1.

Conclusion: Despite the importance of preventive behaviors among key groups in breaking the chain of HIV transmission, the lack of evidence in this area is clear. The need to design a comprehensive tool to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of all subgroups, especially key populations at risk for HIV is a top priority of research in this area.