

2nd World Conference on

STDs, STIs & HIV/AIDS

May 18-19, 2018 | Montreal, Canada

Knowledge and perceptions of HIV/AIDS among high school students in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has the world's third fastest growing AIDS epidemic, but data on HIV/AIDS from this region is considered scarce. In this study, we report a cross-sectional survey of knowledge of and attitudes to HIV and AIDS among 438 high school students in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This city is an international gateway with the highest HIV incidence in the country. The survey highlights both good awareness of HIV with regard to transmission by sexual contact and injection, and also

deficiencies in knowledge about other routes of transmission. The data indicate substantial stigma associated with HIV/AIDS patients, consistent with other reports from the MENA region. These outcomes highlight a need for greater education on at least some aspects of HIV; they also provide a benchmark for future research and a basis for discussions of public policy towards HIV/AIDS awareness and education in Saudi Arabia.

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