

Effectiveness of Reducing Sexually Transmitted Infections in HIV and AIDS

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ABSTRACT

Sexually transmitted disease infection has become a very serious health problem in the world especially HIV and AIDS. The increase in HIV and AIDS is caused by various factors, one of which is a lifestyle. Early treatment is needed to prevent more severe complications. Objective: To discuss effective strategies to reduce the number of sexually transmitted infections in Indonesian society and the challenges that will be faced to reduce the number of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV and AIDS. This study used the literature review method. Data collection was conducted through literature searches on academic databases, such as Google Scholar relevant to the topic of Strategies to reduce sexually transmitted infections. Selection criteria included publications from 2019 to 2024. The results showed that education has been carried out by various existing organizations and has been successful in raising awareness in some communities. However, in some journals, social stigma towards individuals infected with HIV and AIDS is still a challenge that makes it difficult to track and treat. The discussion shows that despite effective education in tackling sexually transmitted disease infection. However, challenges such as social stigma and limited access to information and health services in various regions in Indonesia must be overcome. Overall, reducing STI rates in Indonesia requires a multi-sectoral approach, including the government, non-governmental organizations and communities. Policies that support education, access to health services, and stigma reduction must be effectively implemented to achieve better public health goals. HIV and AIDS in Indonesia requires special handling to emphasize the disease. This is due to the ugly stigma for people affected by the disease. The stigma must be removed immediately so that if there are programs run by an organization to educate and reduce sexually transmitted infections can run well.

Keyword : Public health, prevention of infectious infections, sexually transmitted infections

Introduction

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are infectious diseases that are transmitted mainly through sexual intercourse. These sexually transmitted infections are diseases that are still a public health problem in the world. Every year, the World Health Organization (WHO) reports about 340 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections, including syphilis, gonorrhea, trichomoniasis, and chlamydia. These sexually transmitted infections can still be cured by taking certain medications. However, there are sexually transmitted infections for which no treatment has been found, namely, HIV and AIDS. Data from sub sahara Africa shows that, while many adolescents have their first sex at an early age (ranging from 2.0 to 27% of adolescents under the age of 15) in many cases they do not use any form of protection to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections.¹

HIV/AIDS is a disease that continues to increase in number, and has become a global problem that is sweeping the world.² In Indonesia, there are many cases of sexually transmitted infections due to free association. This is one of the influences on the number of cases of sexually transmitted infections in Indonesia. In addition to teenage relationships, lifestyle changes also affect the occurrence of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) in society.³ Unhealthy lifestyles can also affect the occurrence of sexually transmitted diseases. In Indonesia, East Java stands out as one of the provinces with a high number of STI cases.⁴ Usually this happens mostly to teenagers in Indonesia because they want to follow the existing socialization. According to UNAIDS, in 2020 there were 35.7 million HIV/AIDS cases, in 2017 there were 36.9 million HIV/AIDS cases and in 2018 there were 37.9 million HIV/AIDS cases.⁵ Therefore, sexually transmitted infections in Indonesia must be reduced immediately to make Indonesian people healthier.

One of the factors that can increase sexually transmitted diseases in Indonesia is a person's lifestyle. If a person has a lifestyle such as changing partners, and repeated injection use, then that person is likely to get sexually transmitted infections. This is also greatly influenced by external associations that enter Indonesia without being properly selected. This review aims to discuss effective strategies to reduce the number of sexually transmitted infections in Indonesian society and the challenges that will be faced in reducing the number of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV and AIDS. In addition, this article reviews measures taken to prevent and reduce the rate of sexually transmitted infections, focusing on research published from 2019 to 2024. By understanding these factors, it is hoped that more effective solutions can be found in reducing the number of sexually transmitted diseases.

Material and Methods

This study used a literature review, analysing diverse scholarly sources. The literature search used Google Scholar and focused on publications from 2019 to 2024. The search used keywords including Sexually Transmitted Infections, Prevention of Infectious Infections, and Public Health. Unlike a systematic review, this study does not follow rigid protocols such as PRISMA guidelines or predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Instead, the approach is descriptive and exploratory, aiming to synthesise insights from a broad range of relevant articles. It emphasises identifying recurring themes, conceptual frameworks, and practical strategies reported in the literature. This method allows flexibility in capturing diverse perspectives without being constrained by methodological uniformity. The review highlights trends and variations in prevention efforts, particularly in relation to HIV and AIDS contexts. Sources were selected based on relevance to the research question rather than strict methodological quality assessment. The analysis focuses on the effectiveness of reducing sexually transmitted infections as discussed in prior studies, while acknowledging the limitations of a non-systematic approach. By adopting this narrative style, the review seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of current knowledge and practices in public health interventions.

Results and Discussion

Sexually transmitted infections are diseases that can be easily contracted mainly through sexual intercourse. Some of these sexually transmitted infections are curable and some are incurable. Sexually transmitted diseases that can still be cured are syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. One disease that cannot be cured is HIV and AIDS. This disease still has not found a cure until now. HIV and AIDS are serious diseases because they can make a person depressed if affected and can even cause death if not treated properly. HIV itself attacks the body's immune system which can cause other diseases to appear. AIDS is the last stage of HIV. The prevalence of infectious diseases in Indonesia in 2021 based on laboratory examination results was 11,133 cases, consisting of 2,976 syphilis, 892 advanced syphilis, 1,482 gonorrhea, 1,004 gonorrhea urethritis, 143 genital herpes, 342 trichomoniasis, 7,650 HIV, and 1,677 AIDS.⁶ This information indicates that HIV and AIDS occupy the highest position in the number of cases among other sexually transmitted infectious diseases in Indonesia in 2021, with 7,650 HIV cases and 1,677 AIDS cases. This requires special attention to address the disease, especially HIV/AIDS.

The high number of AIDS cases found at the age of 20-29 years can be estimated when adolescents aged 15-24 years have HIV in their bodies.⁷ This proves that cases of HIV

infection often occur in adolescence and will be detected or develop into AIDS several years later. This indicates that there is a gap between HIV and AIDS. During this period, people with HIV do not realize that they have HIV which can be transmitted to others. Knowing that HIV and AIDS are very dangerous to society, the government often takes policy measures to tackle the disease. However, challenges remain in implementing these policies. Therefore, an effective strategy is needed to reduce the number of HIV and AIDS. PKBI's strategy was able to increase the awareness of female sex workers of the dangers of STIs, one of which is HIV/AIDS, from the work they have been doing.^{2,9} In the study, the strategy they did was to educate the existing female sex workers about HIV. It can also be concluded that this method is very effective because female sex workers know about HIV and AIDS. They work closely with pimps, which helps the research run smoothly. One very effective method is the use of condoms, which are protective devices that allow individuals to have safe sex.⁷ The study concluded that to prevent the transmission of HIV and AIDS by using condoms. Condoms themselves can prevent direct contact with risky body fluids such as sperm and vaginal fluids that are indicated by HIV and AIDS.¹⁰

People who have had multiple partners in sexual intercourse tend to be exposed to HIV. Oral sex also has a high risk when semen from ejaculation enters the mouth.⁸ If there are wounds or ulcers in the person's mouth, it is likely to transmit HIV and AIDS. Therefore, the requirements for safe sex are not changing partners and only having sex with legal partners. However, HIV and AIDS themselves have a bad stigma if someone is affected by the disease. The stigma and views of the Indonesian people, who still look negatively at sexually transmitted infections and HIV, are also one of the challenges that must be faced.^{3,10} This makes it difficult to trace HIV. In addition, to keep HIV from becoming severe, people must diligently seek treatment from doctors in their field so that HIV does not get worse. In addition, the difficulty of accessing education in Indonesia is due to the country's vast geography.

Conclusion

Sexually transmitted infectious diseases are very dangerous for humans. One of them is HIV and AIDS. This disease is incurable, and if not treated properly, the affected person can die. Many factors can affect this disease, namely changing partners, repeated injections, not using protection during sexual intercourse, and others. Therefore, it is important to educate early on so that people know the consequences that will be experienced when exposed to HIV and AIDS. An effective strategy to reduce the number of sexually transmitted diseases is to educate the community so that people will be more careful in having sexual relations.

Bad stigma must also be eliminated in society so that the handling of HIV and AIDS is more effective.

Declaration of Generative AI in Scientific Writing

The authors affirm that this article used generative artificial intelligence tools, including Microsoft Copilot, solely to improve grammar and clarity, including in the methods section. These tools were not used for generating content, data analysis, or interpretation. The authors are fully responsible for the accuracy and integrity of the content as well as the conclusions presented in this study

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