



ABS005

HIV/AIDS COUNSELLING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES: CAN TESTING AND COUNSELLING CURB THE Epidemic?

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The Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic is into 29th year since first HIV case was diagnosed. UN applauded India for its excellent work in reducing the amount of infections by half from 2000 to 2009. In 2009, there were only 170,000 deaths in India while the world had 1,700,000 deaths due to AIDS. UN praised India's large, effective contribution to the effort in responding to AIDS.

Now Counseling and Testing Services of General Clients during 2013-2014, 130.3 lakh (96%) received counseling and testing services against the annual target of 134.81 lakh general clients. In the financial year 2014-15, the number of ICTCs offering HIV counseling and testing services went up to more than 16,000 centers in India (Stand Alone ICTCs including FICTC & PPPICTCs). 57.02 lakhs general clients were tested for HIV (April - September, 2014) out of annual target of 118 lakhs and 87,226 general clients were detected HIV positive. Diagnosis of HIV/AIDS via early testing along with Pre-test and Post-test counselling is important for psychosocial stabilization. Risk reduction counseling as a preventive counseling method is equally important in high-risk individuals such as adolescents, substance abusers and in gay and bisexual population.

Regular patient counseling is different than HIV/AIDS counseling. Counseling helps HIV infected patients in various ways to cope themselves in a normal life with normal living. Acknowledging the persons about infection, allow such persons to receive prevention counseling to help initiate behavior change to avoid infection, or, if already infected, to prevent transmission to others. Counseling mostly improves the client's adherence to ART drugs, maintain nutritional diet, and improve psychosocial behavior and quality of life. To maintain quality counseling for the patients, counseling provider's skills on counseling need to be updated as directed by the guidelines of NACO with improved strategies.

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