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A cross- sectional study"**

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## **Perception of Health science students towards Sex education – A cross- sectional study**

### **Introduction**

Sex education is defined as the provision of information, attitudes, beliefs and values about bodily development, sex, sexuality, and relationships, along with adequate skill-building to communicate, as well as make informed decisions regarding sex and sexual health. The conservative nature of Indian society, clubbed with resistance to change has acted as a barrier when it comes to the delivery of comprehensive, empowering, consent-based sex education to Indian adolescents. With this background, the current research was conducted to assess the perception and knowledge of health science students towards sex education.

### **Methodology**

In this cross-sectional study, 440 medical students of Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore were included. The sample size was calculated based on the assumption that 50% of the medical students have a positive perception regarding sexual education, with 10% relative precision, 95% confidence interval and 10% non-response. Institutional Ethics committee clearance was obtained prior to the commencement of the study, Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire with sections on general participant information, perception about sex education and knowledge regarding sex education. The questionnaires were sent in the form of google doc link. Only the completed questionnaires were used for final analysis.

### **Results**

Majority of the study participants (324, 67.4%) believed that the stigma around sex education is not justified. A high proportion of them (169, 37.5%) believed that they have not received adequate sex education and 278 (57.3%) believed that the information about sexual health in our current curriculum is not enough. Less than half (45.2%) of the total study population recalled receiving a formal talk on sex education in school. Out of the people who did receive lessons, 46.2% did not receive it from a formal instructor while most (51.1%) preferred to get it from experts. Out of the 485 participants, only 54 (11.1%) could correctly identify all the modes of HIV transmission. 167(34%) participants wrongly identified saliva (a common misconception) as a mode of transmission; and more than 9% participants wrongly identified urine and feces also as a mode of transmission.

### **Conclusion**

Most of the study participants believed proper sex education can reduce the occurrence of rapes, assaults and STDs. The proportion of study participants who believed they received adequate sex education as a part of the school curriculum was not satisfactory. On the other hand, quite a large proportion of study participants were not ready to spread awareness on sexual health as a part of the healthcare system.

**Keywords:** Sex education,  
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Mangalore