



HIV Information, awareness and attitudes towards PLHIV among social work students and social workers in Kyrgyzstan

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Introduction

The results of a socio-pedagogical study conducted in 2022-2023 among practicing social workers of state and non-state institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic and students in the direction of "social work" in order to study their level of awareness of HIV/AIDS, the level of tolerance towards PLHIV, as well as their willingness to work with them.

Epidemiological situation of the Kyrgyz Republic in 01.01.2023(cumulatively)



HIV positive
12331



Citizens KR
11527



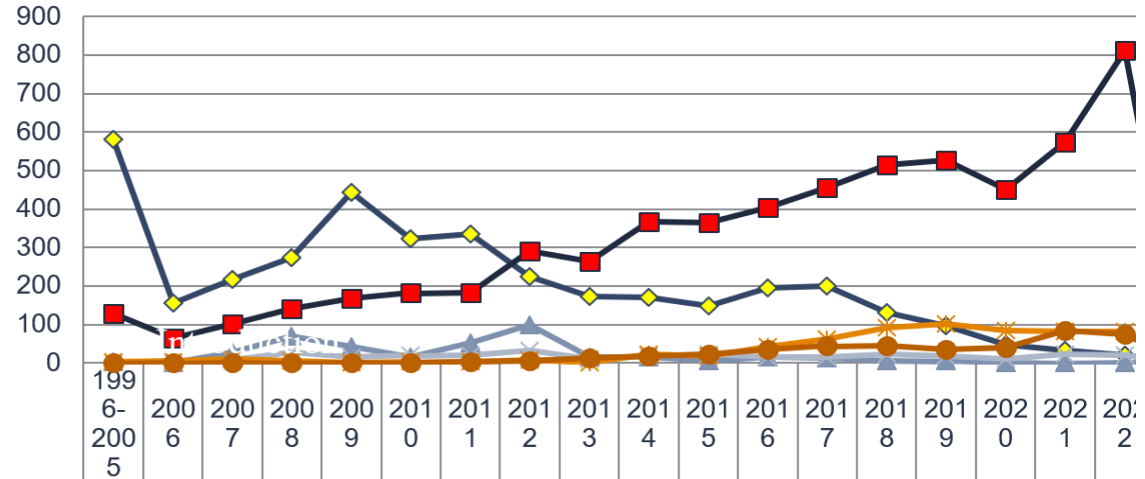
Women
4278



Men
7249

A total of 3089 PLHIV died, 792 of them at the AIDS stage

Ways of HIV transmission



	1995	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
◆ Parenteral	580	155	217	275	444	324	336	224	172	170	149	194	201	131	97	47	32	21
■ Sexual	128	64	102	142	167	182	184	292	263	368	365	404	456	514	526	450	574	814
▲ Parenteral(&&&)	4	2	28	70	42	15	53	99	15	15	7	15	13	6	5	2	0	1
⚡ Vertical	2	1	9	28	15	20	21	33	10	18	22	16	16	23	19	11	24	20
✱ Undefined path	3	5	11	7	0	3	4	9	2	23	19	42	63	93	101	84	81	81
● Sexual (homo)	0	1	2	0	1	0	4	6	12	18	22	35	44	46	35	41	85	75

- Today, in Kyrgyz Republic, social work is an integrated, universal activity. At present, mechanisms have been developed for social support for the majority of socially vulnerable categories of the population in the field of healthcare, education, and the social protection system.
- With regard to PLHIV, representatives of target groups (SR, MSM and TG), PWID and prisoners, mechanisms of support, social support in prevention, treatment, and care programs at the state level have also been worked out.
- As a specialty and academic discipline, "Social Work" began its existence in 1994 at the Bishkek University for the Humanities

Purpose of the study

■ The purpose of this study is to show the levels of awareness of students-social workers and practicing social workers about the problem of HIV/AIDS, their tolerance towards PLHIV, and their willingness to provide professional assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS in the course of their professional activities.



Methodology

documentary method

analysis of the State educational standards of vocational education, curricula in the direction of "social work" 540200

questionnaire

The purpose of the survey of the student community and practicing social workers of state social institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic is to identify the level of awareness of the problem of HIV/AIDS, the level of their tolerant attitude towards this category of social work clients

the method of expert assessments

The purpose of using the method of expert assessments is to study the opinions of practicing social workers about the existing system of providing social services to PLHIV and the necessary professional competencies that are necessary to work with PLHIV



Study participant

01

The first group of respondents.
153 third- and fourth-year students studying in the field of "Social Work" from 7 universities of the country took part in the survey.

02

The second group consisted of 146 specialists in social work of district and city departments of the Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic

03

The third group of respondents consisted of 15 social workers of non-governmental organizations (hereinafter referred to as NGOs) providing services to PLHIV.

Total number of respondents is
314 people,
of these, **46 men** and **268 women**



Results: Summary

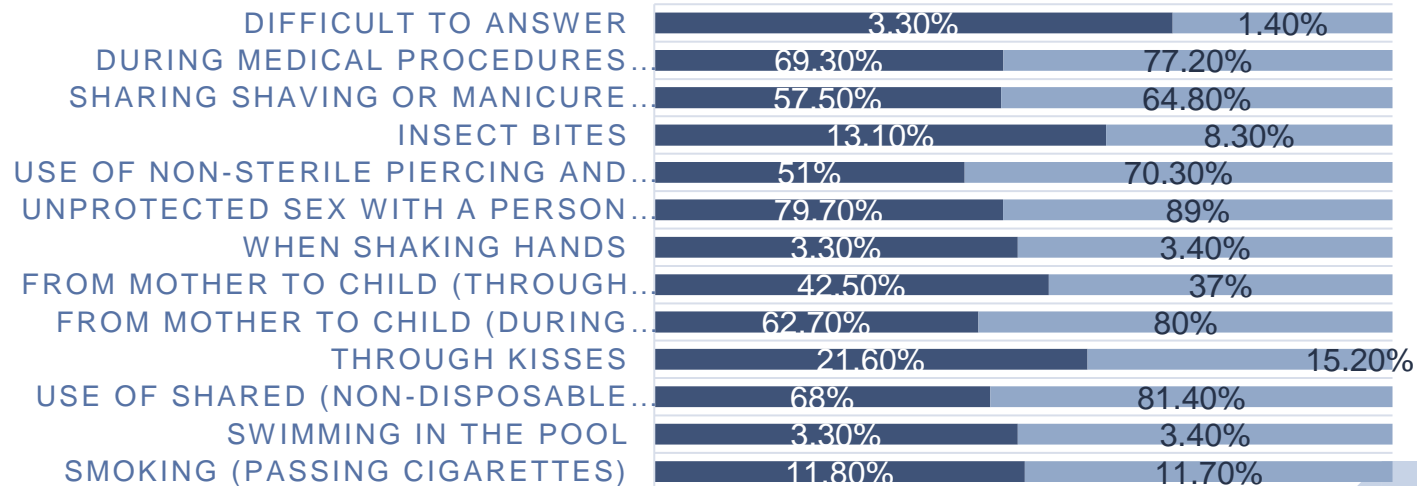
According to the objectives of this study, survey questions were developed, which are aimed at studying the two components of professional competence. The first part is aimed at assessing the formation of **cognitive competence** in HIV infection and the requirements for a specialist in accordance with the State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education in the direction of "social work" (540200) of the Kyrgyz Republic

The total score of the survey participants, reflecting **the level of knowledge** of the respondents, showed their average knowledge, both among *students 64.5%* and *social workers 70.3%*

Results: Summary

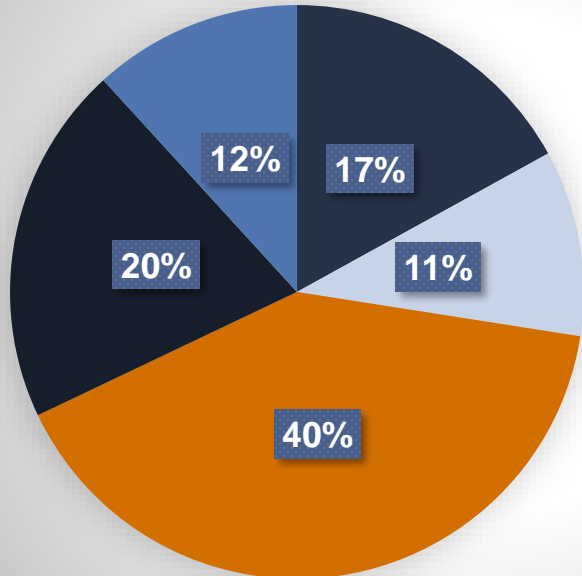
To the question: Mark the known ways of HIV transmission

■ Student ■ Social workers



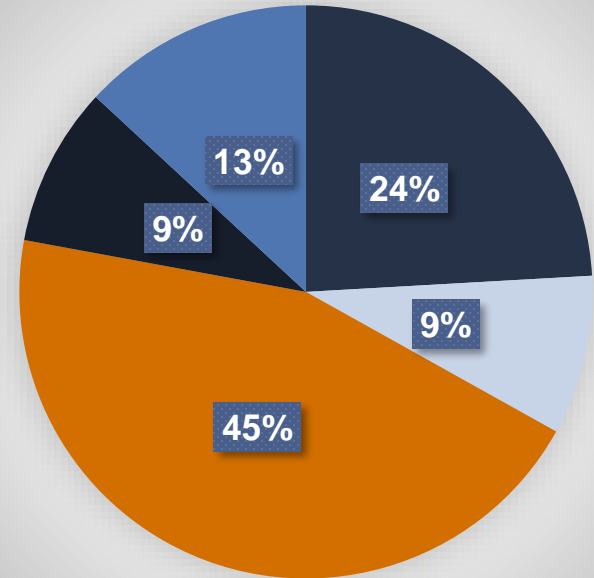
To the question “What is your attitude towards a classmate/colleague if you find out that he is HIV-infected?”

Students



- I think that will change, I will feel sorry for him
- I think that will change, I will reduce to minimize all contact with him
- No, it won't change
- Students/colleague with HIV infection should not study at an educational institution/organizations together with others
- I find it difficult to answer

Social workers



Discussion

1. Social work and HIV/AIDS education

To study the specifics of training social workers who are competent to work with PLHIV and their families, we turned to the analysis of current **state standards and educational training programs in social work**. They (secondary special education, bachelor's, master's) do not distinguish any categories of clients of social work. There are no specific requirements for the training of social workers with different categories of the population.

And the types of professional activity, professional competencies and learning outcomes can be taken into account in the process of developing the **basic educational programs of each university**, in accordance with the narrow profiles of its training.

Discussion

7 universities
in the country graduate
social work specialists
(bachelor's and master's
degrees)

- There is only one discipline "Medical and social foundations of health care", within the framework of which it is possible to give superficial information and human health.

Bishkek State University

- "Social work with key populations»
2018-2019
- "Social and psychological work with
people living with HIV/AIDS"
2022-2023

Discussion

2. HIV/AIDS awareness of social work students and social workers

The results of the study revealed a certain lack of knowledge about the problem of HIV/AIDS and the presence of a certain level of social stigma in relation to PLHIV, which dictates the need to raise the level of awareness of social workers and students about HIV.

The low level of knowledge about HIV infection leads to stigma, self-stigma and social discrimination of PLHIV in society.

It turned out that both students and practicing social workers have a lack of knowledge about the regulations and social services provided by PLHIV.

Discussion

3. The role of social workers in HIV/AIDS prevention

Social workers of state institutions are sufficiently involved in HIV/AIDS prevention measures in the country. They are involved in identifying families and children in difficult life situations, in their social, legal, psychological, pedagogical support, raising the level of public awareness about HIV, organizing information events for young people, drawing public attention to the problem of HIV, etc.

But, it should be noted that according to the answers of social workers in the state structure, only 11.7% of 146 specialists have experience working with PLHIV.

And the non-governmental sector, which was one of the first to respond to the epidemic, is actively working closely with key populations, promoting access to counseling and health care for people living with HIV/AIDS. Since the early 2000s, in the context of Kyrgyzstan's economic difficulties, most HIV prevention activities have been carried out through civil sector organizations with the support of international organizations.

Conclusion

- **Firstly**, the student must be theoretically ready to work with PLHIV, have all the necessary knowledge,
- **Secondly**, he must be free from stigma and myths about the disease, and finally, he must have practical skills and abilities that allow him to solve situational problems.
- It is necessary to raise the issue not only of including a topic or discipline about HIV/AIDS in the training programs of social workers, but also of developing and implementing a narrow-profile training program for social work with key populations which is aimed at forming a set of necessary professional competencies of a social worker.



Thank you for your attention!

Any questions?
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