

FACT SHEET 7: AIDS COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

MEDIA SOURCES FOR AIDS INFORMATION

In South Africa there are several mediums used to reach youth with prevention messages. It was found that television (88%) and radio (78.3%) were the most prominent media sources of AIDS information for those aged 12–14 years, whilst for those aged 15–18 years, television (90.6%) and posters (82.8%) were most prominent.

Awareness of national AIDS communication programmes

AIDS communication programmes at national level include the government Khomanani Campaign, and programmes such as Soul City, Soul Buddyz and loveLife which are led by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The large majority of respondents aged 12–18 years were aware of the major national programmes with the exception of Khomanani in the younger age group, where only half were aware of the programme.

The reach of all programmes in rural areas was overall lower, and the language groups less likely to be reached were English, Afrikaans, Tsonga and Venda. Awareness of programmes among white adolescents aged 12–14 and 15–18 years was very low – only 8.9% of 12-14 year olds mentioned Soul City; 9.5% mentioned Khomanani and 15.4% mentioned Soul Buddyz. Awareness of loveLife was considerably higher at 42.1%.

Communication and knowledge of HIV/AIDS-related issues

Only 16% of parents or caregivers discussed HIV transmission with children aged 5-11 years, and only 14.5% discussed how to prevent the disease (Table 1). Sex was more likely to have been discussed with female children than male children, as was sexual abuse. Furthermore, only half of the parent/guardians had spoken to children in this age group about sexual abuse.

Table 1: Communication between parent/caregivers and children aged 12–14 years about sex and sexual abuse

Issues concern	N	Yes (%)
Has a parent/guardian ever talked to you about sex?		
Male	597	35.2
Female	640	50.1
Total	1 237	42.6
Has a parent/guardian ever talked to you about sexual abuse?		
Male	588	42
Female	635	59.5
Total	1 223	50.8

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that the government’s Khomanani campaign include a strategy that is specific to reaching children to communicate age-relevant information about HIV/AIDS through mass media channels.
- All national programmes should co-ordinate their efforts to reach rural communities to a greater extent, and also address the marginalisation of language and race groups identified in the study.

Note: South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey, 2008: The health of our children by Shisana et al. was part of a large national population-based household survey conducted by a research consortium led by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The survey included 8 966 children aged 0-18 years. The full report is available on www.hsrbpress.co.za.