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## Risk perception, HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitude and practice of the university community in Africa: A case from Ethiopia

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**Aim:** The study sought to assess risk perception, HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitude and behaviors of the ECSC community to more adequately contribute to the literature in the field.

**Background:** Though HIV/IDS is one of the worst health crises in recorded history in the world, it has moved beyond being primarily a health issue, to developmental crisis. More than 83% of all new infections in many African countries are among young and productive people in which females are outnumbering males. Higher learning institutions such as the Ethiopian Civil Service College, need to seriously address HIV/AIDS in their mandate.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted between January-June 2011 using mixed methods where a structured questionnaire was administered to 250 respondents while focus group discussion was conducted and selected key informants were interviewed.

**Results:** Out of 250 respondents, 238(with 95% response rate) returned the questionnaire. The majority of respondents know about the risk, the means of transmission and prevention about HIV&AIDS. All respondents never perceive they are at risk for HIV. Unsafe sex and multiple concurrent sexual partnerships were found among all religious groups, married staff and students. However, compared to female respondents, males were found to admit to more unsafe sex practices. Qualitative data supports this finding.

**Conclusions:** Positive changes regarding awareness and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS were noted, yet comprehensive knowledge is still lacking. An improved strategy to promote comprehensive knowledge and behavioral change interventions is needed in ECSC. Implications from these findings suggest that other institutions may benefit from similar changes.

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