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Risk perception, HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitude and practice of the university community: The case of Ethiopian Civil Service College

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Background: Though HIV/AIDS is one of the worst health crises in the recorded history of 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 people. Higher learning institutions need to seriously address HIV/AIDS in their mandate. This study sought to assess risk perception, HIV/AIDS related knowledge, attitude and behaviors of the ECSC community.

Materials and methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted between January and June 2011. Mixed methods of combining structured questionnaire, focus group discussion and key informants interviews were conducted.

Results: Out of 250 respondents, 238 returned the questionnaire. The majority of respondents know about the risk, ways of transmission and prevention about HIV and 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. Qualitative data support this finding.

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

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HIV infection of human regulatory T cells (Treg) downregulates Foxp3 expression and produces a loss of the suppressive capacity of these cells

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Regulatory T cells (Treg) play an important role in infections modulating host immune responses and avoiding over-reactive immunity. Immune hyperactivation associated with HIV infection lead to a marked erosion and deregulation of immune system, and by that, the role of Treg in HIV-infected patients is critical because their implication preventing this hyperactivation. The findings about the role of Treg in HIV infection are controversial, and considering that Treg are susceptible of being infected by HIV, there are not data about the effect of HIV infection on Treg phenotype and function. We demonstrated by first time that HIV infection of Treg markedly disturb the phenotype of these cellsdownregulating the expression of Foxp3 and CD25, which is followed by a loss of their suppressive capacity. We also demonstrated that the balance between Treg and effector cells is broken in HIV patients by a direct effect of the virus on Treg, and finally we have also described that HIV-infected patients have a marked deficit and impaired function of Treg that would be related with the incidence of Immune hyperactivation in these patients.

Biography

Rafael Correa Rocha has completed his first PhD in Biology at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid (Spain) in 2004. His thesis was awarded with the National Prize of Doctorate 2005. He joined the ISREC (Epalinges, Switzerand) as a Post-doctoral researcher and afterwards, he obtained a position as Assistant Professor at the Hopitaux Universitaires de Genève (Switzerland). He joined the IISGM of Madridas a Senior Scientist in February 2008. He completed a second PhD in Medicine at the Universidad Autónoma of Madrid in 2014. At present, he is the Head of the Laboratory of Immune-regulation at IISGM. He has published more than 40 papers in reputed journals.

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