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VULNERABILITY OF YOUNG MALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO HIV IN KINSHASA/DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: ANALYSIS OF SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND FREQUENCY OF BACTERIAL URETHRITIS

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Unprotected sex is considered as the main route of HIV transmission in Kinshasa/Democratic Republic of Congo. This study aimed to analyze the vulnerability of young male university students to HIV through the analysis of their sexual behavior and the search for bacterial infections in the urinary tract. Morning urine samples were collected aseptically from 411 young male university students (19-25 years), and brought to the laboratory for bacterial research. Bacteriological techniques were used to isolate and identify bacteria present in urine. Socio-demographic and behavioral characteristics of these students were also collected. The result from the bacteriological analyses showed that at least one bacterium is isolated in 50.4% of the 411 samples analyzed. These results indicate the predominance of *Staphylococcus aureus* (22.3%), *Streptococcus sp.* (11.8%), and Coagulase-negative staphylococci (10.4%). It happens that these bacteria are not normal hosts of the urinary tract and are susceptible to transmission during unprotected sex intercourse. The analysis of socio-demographic and behavioral data had meanwhile indicated that 99.5% were sexually active, 86.7% had sex in the last three months, 22.3% had used a condom the last time they had sex, and only 10.4% were aware of their HIV status. These biological and socio-demographic results have demonstrated that young male university students in Kinshasa who participated in this study are highly vulnerable to HIV. This, given the fact it was observed among them a low rate of HIV testing and of the condom use, as well as a high prevalence of bacterial infections in the urinary tract. Hence there is need for a more in-depth analysis of the situation to enable the implementation of appropriate and effective strategies for HIV prevention for young male university students in Kinshasa/Democratic Republic of Congo.

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