

**FACTORS INFLUENCING HIV/AIDS RISK BEHAVIOR AMONG  
FRESHMEN STUDENTS IN AFGHAN UNIVERSITIES**

The image features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the Mahidol University logo in the background. The logo is circular with a gold border and contains a central emblem with Thai script. The name 'ABDUL BASIR MANSOOR' is printed in bold black text across the center of the logo.

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**ABSTRACT**

This cross-sectional study aimed to describe the level of knowledge, perception/attitude and practices related to HIV/AIDS as well as factors influencing HIV/AIDS risk behavior among freshmen students at Afghan universities. The study was conducted in 2007 among 1054 freshmen students at four universities in Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar and Balkh provinces of Afghanistan. The probability two stage sampling method was used. A self administered structured questionnaire with socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge, perception/attitude and practices related to HIV/AIDS key variables was used. The data were analyzed in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, median and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics such as Chi square and logistic regression were performed.

The results of the study concerning socio-demographic characteristics revealed that most of the respondents were male (72.1%); most of them 19-20 years old (46.6%); most of the respondents were unmarried (93.4%); the majority of them lived with their parents during the study period (69.5%); most of them came from an urban hometown (70.1%); the major ethnic groups were Tajik (44.6%) and Pashtoon (38.6%); the majority of the students (66.9%) had a monthly living allowance of less than 5000 Afs; thirty eight percent of the students' fathers had graduated from college; less than half (43.7%) of the students' mothers were illiterate; most of the students' fathers had a private business (37.2%); the majority of the students' mothers were housewives (78.4%).

Majority of the respondents (90.8%) were aware of HIV/AIDS but only 31.2% of them had a good level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS (correctly answered more than 80% of questions); 56.6% of the students had a high (positive) level of perception/attitude towards HIV/AIDS (higher than mean score); and 29.6% of students had at least one of the risk practices and therefore could be counted as a high risk behavior group.

As the study identified, there were many factors such as university, age, gender, hometown, the education of students' fathers, alcohol-drinking habits, exposure to pornographic videos and pictures, and level of knowledge about HIV/AIDS that significantly influenced high risk behavior related to HIV/AIDS.

The results of this study can be used for a comprehensive educational program to be established for students at a university level as well as at a high school level.

**KEY WORDS: HIV/AIDS/KAP/FRESHMEN STUDENTS/AFGHANISTAN**

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