

California State University, San Bernardino

CSUSB ScholarWorks

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

2013

Knowledge, attitudes, and preparation among Master of Social Work students on the HIV/AIDS community

April Marie Fernandez

Maria Guadalupe Villasenor-Perez

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Fernandez, April Marie and Villasenor-Perez, Maria Guadalupe, "Knowledge, attitudes, and preparation among Master of Social Work students on the HIV/AIDS community" (2013). *Theses Digitization Project*. 3967.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/3967>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PREPARATION AMONG
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS ON THE
HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work


by
April Marie Fernandez
Maria Guadalupe Villasenor-Perez
June 2013

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PREPARATION AMONG
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS ON THE
HIV/AIDS COMMUNITY

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino


by
April Marie Fernandez
Maria Guadalupe Villasenor-Perez
June 2013

Approved by:



Dr. Janet C. Chang, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

6/10/2013
Date



Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

HIV/AIDS is one of the most urgent public health problems in the United States, therefore the need for skilled social workers in the HIV/AIDS epidemic cannot be ignored. The purpose of this study was to examine how well Master of Social Work students were prepared in providing services to the HIV/AIDS population, and if adding a HIV/AIDS course in the curriculum would help them feel competent in working with the HIV/AIDS population. There were 57 graduate social work students from California State University San Bernardino that participated. Participants were given a questionnaire measuring their knowledge, attitudes, and education on HIV/AIDS.

The findings of this study indicated the majority of the participants did not gain any HIV/AIDS knowledge in the program. Although most of the participants did not gain HIV/AIDS knowledge in the program, the majority of the participants (91%) indicated that it would help them feel more knowledgeable and prepared in working with the HIV/AIDS population if the program offered an HIV/AIDS course. In regards to the recommendations for social work practice, its important that students, social workers,

and faculty members in this field are aware of the lack of knowledge that is gained in this program in regards to working with the HIV/AIDS population. The findings of this study indicated the majority of the participants did not gain any HIV/AIDS knowledge in the program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge our parents for being the biggest support in all our academic endeavors. We would like to acknowledge Dr. Chang for her guidance and support in supervising this project. We also would like to acknowledge Dr. Mac for her guidance and support in research. We would like to thank the social work faculty for all their hard work and dedication in teaching us the skills and knowledge of the social work profession. Finally, we thank all our family and friends for all their support and love.

DEDICATION

Dedico este proyecto a mis padres Miguel y Soledad Villasenor. Gracias por darme la vida, su ejemplo y su amor incondicional. Su apoyo y el siempre creer en mi son el motor de mi vida. A mi hermano y a mis hermanas, tambien les agradezco su constante apoyo, sus palabras y todo lo que han hecho por mi. A mi tia Edith, por motivarme y inspirarme a ser mas en la vida. A mis sobrinos y sobrinas tambien tengo mucho que agradecer. Ustedes mis sobrinos(as) han sido la mayor razon por la cual yo he alcanzado mis metas. Uno de mis objetivos es sembrar en ustedes el amor por la educacion y superacion. Les prometo que dia a dia seguire luchando arduamente para motivarles y demostrarles que con esfuerzo y perceiverancia pueden lograr todo lo que se propongan en esta vida. A Dios, quien siempre ha estado conmigo, le doy infinitas gracias por tantas bendiciones, por una familia maravillosa, y por trasformarme en un mejor ser humano cada dia. A Dios le pido que siempre illumine mi camino para asi cumplir con el proposito que el me ha encomendado, servir, amar y ayudar a los demas. A traves de estas lineas les transmito mi amor, agradecimiento, y un deseo profundo de que todos sigamos esforzandonos para alcanzar nuestros metas. Gracias por ser parte de mi vida y de mis pensamientos. Los amo con todo mi Corazon!

Maria Guadalupe Villasenor-Perez

This thesis represents the culmination of an accomplishment in my life. To My Family: My Mother, Maria Fernandez for always being there for me and loving me unconditionally, for giving me the strength to keep fighting, and inspiring me to be more. My Father, Gustavo Fernandez for being the number one provider and making me believe that anything is possible. "Te quiero mucho mami y papi". For my sisters and brothers, thank you for your support and ongoing encouragement. To my nieces and nephew, thank you for always making me strive for more. I want you to believe you can accomplish anything you set your minds to. To my closest friends, thank you for sticking by me through the tears and laughter. To my educators and mentors, thank you for your guidance and believing in me. Lastly I want to thank God for being in my life and getting me through these past three years. Thank you all for being such a blessing in my life. I love you all very much.

April Marie Fernandez

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Problem Statement	1
Purpose of the Study	6
Significance of the Project for Social Work	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	10
HIV/AIDS Prevention and Awareness	10
Education and Training Related to HIV/AIDS	13
Attitudes Related to HIV/AIDS	16
Theoretical Frameworks	17
Summary	18
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction	19
Study Design	19
Sampling	21
Data Collection and Instruments	21
Procedures	22
Protection of Human Subjects	22
Data Analysis	23
Summary	23

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction	25
Presentation of the Findings	25
Demographics Characteristics of Participants	25
Training and Education in the Master of Social Work Program	27
Preparedness of Master of Social Work Students	29
Summary	33

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction	34
Discussion	34
Limitations	38
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research	39
Conclusions	40
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE	42
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT	45
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	47
REFERENCES	49
ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE	51

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants	26
Table 2. Training and Education in the Master of Social Work Program	29
Table 3. Preparedness of Master of Social Work Student	31

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS social work has changed a great amount because of successful medications, which has extended the life of people living with HIV/AIDS (Strug, Grube, & Beckerman, 2002). Therefore, training and education for social workers is needed in order to best serve this growing population. This chapter emphasizes statistics of the incidence of HIV/AIDS and the increasing need of social workers to work with this population. Therefore, graduate MSW students need to understand the importance HIV/AIDS epidemic in order to provide appropriate services to people living with aids (PLHWA).

Problem Statement

"The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)" (Koob & Harvan, 2003, p. 309). It is a chronic condition that inhibits the immune system to protect itself from diseases. HIV became known in the US in 1981, as one of the first terminal illnesses (Koob & Harvan, 2003). Early on during the epidemic most of the HIV population were homosexual men, bisexual men, hemophiliacs, and IV drug

users. Now HIV has become more prevalent among women and children, and the number of cases is escalating in smaller cities and rural communities (Diaz & Kelly, 1991).

According to the Center for Disease Control there were an estimated 48,100 new HIV infections. The majority (61%) of new infections occurred in gay and bisexual men. Black/African American men and women were also strongly affected and were estimated to have a HIV prevalence rate was seven times higher than the incidence rate among whites. (CDC, 2009, para. 9)

HIV infection has disproportionately affected black and Hispanic Americans, with over 42 percent of all cases occurring among these two racial or ethnic groups. Black and Hispanic women account for 67 percent of female AIDS cases in the United States, and 77 percent of all children with AIDS are black or Hispanic. (CDC, 2009, para. 19)

A large amount of challenges have appeared in the social work profession due to the HIV epidemic. Social work is the profession that serves the majority of the HIV population that includes, minority groups who are

oppressed for their sexual orientation, race, gender, or class. This will cause social workers to be more likely to provide services to the HIV population (Koob & Harvan, 2003). In addition, as the incidence of HIV infection escalates and shifts among populations social workers in various fields have found HIV related problems in their practice and their clients. This trend will continue as HIV and AIDS become more prevalent (Diaz & Kelly, 1991). Therefore, the need for skilled social workers in the AIDS epidemic cannot be ignored.

New graduates and current social work students need to understand all aspects of the AIDS epidemic including biopsychosocial, ethical, and political issues in order to provide effective and appropriate services to persons living with AIDS. Furthermore, students need self-awareness, knowledge, and technical skill to competently deal with clients with AIDS whose illness is associated with social ambivalence and stigma linked to sexuality and drug abuse. Moreover, teaching content on AIDS in schools of social work is becoming urgent, given the widespread anxiety and misinformation given by media reports, special interest groups, and by some health professionals (Miller & Dane, 1990).

Many health and social work professionals are not prepared or trained to work with people affected by HIV. According to Wolf & Mitchell (2002) "As the lifespan of people with HIV is increasingly due to the new drugs in 1995, with promising results, the importance on the prevention of HIV-positive clients is important as clients are living longer and healthier lives" (p. 166). It is important that social workers receive education and knowledge early in their careers about HIV and AIDS prevention and all aspects of the disease in order to better serve this population and spread awareness which could help decrease HIV incidence. It is clear that there is need for well-informed, well-trained social workers, nonetheless there is not enough emphasis on curricula in schools of social work regarding HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, research indicates that, for many social work students, a lack of basic knowledge about HIV/AIDS prevents effective work with clients (Steiner, 1995).

The United States has policies that have facilitated prevention, awareness, and education on the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Policies such as the Ryan White Care Act provide assistance in serving people living with AIDS (PLHWA).

In title one of the Ryan White CARE Act, forty-two metropolitan areas are provided with the assistance of helping PLWHA. Title two funds the 54 states and territories, serving approximately 296,000 clients. Title three offers counseling, testing, and early intervention services and has served a greater number of women, children, and minorities. Title four funds have developed comprehensive, coordinated systems of care in more than 80 communities.

(Soliman & Miah, 1998, p. 43)

Moreover, Soliman and Miah (1998) stated that the Department of Housing and Urban Development offers \$300 million for housing assistance to communities where the HIV population is high. Furthermore, the White House allowed the Office of National AIDS Policy to provide information on AIDS/HIV to the public on policy issues. The CDC has worked on providing information on prevention programs to the communities that target risky behaviors. All these policies help aid and protect PLWHA. In order to expand awareness of such policies it is important that policies get incorporated in the MSW curriculum. This will improve MSW student's preparedness to work with the HIV/AIDS population. It will also increase awareness and

prevention in which could help decrease the overall incidence of this epidemic (Soliman & Miah, 1998).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out how well prepared college students are in providing services to the HIV/AIDS population, and if adding a HIV/AIDS course in the curriculum will help them feel competent in working with the HIV/AIDS population. The course would enable students to acquire sufficient knowledge and skills to incorporate when providing services to the HIV/AIDS population. The HIV/AIDS course would include complex biopsychosocial, ethical, political, and epidemiological aspects that social workers need to know in order to best provide effective, timely, and appropriate services to the HIV/AIDS population.

Integrating an HIV/AIDS course into the social work curriculum should help social workers be well prepared, to address the various psychosocial issues that affect these clients and their support system. Social workers must know how to educate and counsel clients about the difficult subjects of illness, disability, drug use, sex, and death. They should understand the issues involved in

service delivery in the numerous settings where HIV will be encountered, and among the diverse populations that are affected by the virus (Steiner, 1995). In addition, AIDS education should provide a full range of educational strategies tailored for working with specific target groups and settings. This course would prepare social work students to effectively and ethically serve persons with or at risk for AIDS and their significant others (Miller & Dane, 1990).

This study is being conducted due to a great amount of social work schools that do not offer a HIV/AIDS course in the curriculum. Steiner (1995) stated that students lack knowledge of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to Koob and Harvan (2003) social workers have difficulty coping with death, prejudices, and stereotypes. This is due to the lack of attention of HIV/AIDS in schools of social work curricula. Schools of social work keep having difficulty meeting the needs of this particular population. This has caused, HIV/AIDS specific courses excluded as a main concern in schools of social work (Koob & Harvan, 2003).

Therefore, this study will administer surveys to MSW graduate students to measure how competent they feel in

providing services to the HIV/AIDS population. The findings will help determine the type of HIV/AIDS course that will be beneficial to implement in the social work curricula in order to improve the students skills and knowledge in serving this population.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

This study is essential to the social work profession because it needs to recognize the limitations in providing services to the populations affected. Social workers need to deal with their own fear of HIV/AIDS and help the general population to do the same through sound education that destroys myths and presents accurate information about how HIV/AIDS is contracted. Also with the emergence of life prolonging antiretroviral AIDS medications, many infected individuals will live longer lives and this will cause the social work profession to come across the HIV/AIDS population more frequently (Gilbert, 2001). Additionally, more attention on HIV prevention is vital, so that patients have longer life expectancies (Wolf & Mitchell, 2002). Since the incidence of HIV infection has escalated and shifted among populations, social workers in various fields have found

HIV related problems in their practice and their clients. This trend will continue as HIV infection and AIDS become more prevalent (Diaz & Kelly, 1991).

For those reasons this study is needed to effectively educate social work students in HIV/AIDS awareness, to better assist this population. The results of this study will potentially contribute to social work practice by preparing and educating social work students in dealing with the HIV/AIDS population. It can also help implement policies to change social work curricula to include a HIV/AIDS course. The assessing phase of the generalist intervention process will be informed in this study. This phase measured student's preparedness, attitudes, and knowledge in working with the HIV/AIDS population.

The research question is How well prepared are college students to effectively serve the HIV/AIDS population?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review presents a discussion of (a) the importance of HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness in social work programs, (b) associations between education and training related to HIV/AIDS in social work programs, (c) attitudes by social workers related to HIV/AIDS and (d) theoretical frameworks related to the knowledge gained by social workers after sufficient training and education on HIV/AIDS. The information presented within this review is essential in understanding the responses of social work students toward implementing an HIV/AIDS course to better prepare them in dealing with this population.

HIV/AIDS Prevention and Awareness

Since the very beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic social workers have played a major role in providing services such as prevention to HIV patients and their families (Wolf & Mitchelle, 2002). According to Wolf and Mitchell (2002) "Social workers provide services to individuals in multiple health, mental health, and other

community based settings" (p. 167). Social work services include psychosocial assessments for clients that have been addressing issues related to their mental health, social environment, health, substance abuse, and problem solving skills. Additionally, social workers in public health are ideal resources to participate in early detections of individuals who need to receive HIV antibody testing and to provide education on prevention (Wolf & Mitchelle, 2002). There is no treatment or vaccine for AIDS. Therefore the only reliable method is to reduce the risk of becoming infected. Awareness of the different communities such as the gay community can contribute to prevention through education. Information needs to be aimed to high-risk groups and the value of culturally based prevention techniques should be undated for student use (Miller & Dane, 1990).

Social workers participate in serving the people affected by HIV/AIDS by providing support and counseling, and develop interventions in the efforts to prevent the disease. Providing treatment for HIV/AIDS patients is an ethical necessity especially in countries that have high HIV/AIDS incidence. Professionals in the social work field are in a position to demonstrate leadership and

collaboration in responding to this pandemic (Hall, 2007). Therefore, social workers have the skills to create awareness about gender inequality, poverty, and help build better alliances. Additionally, it is important to work with groups and organizations interested in breaking down the stigma and judgment of the HIV/AIDS populations (Hall, 2007).

It is important that oppressed groups and minorities have access to medical care in order to prevent this disease from spreading (Hall, 2007). "The social work values are consistent with the transformational approach, where the inequality of social justice and social structure are seen as the responsibility of social workers" (Hall, 2007, p. 57). Prevention, education, awareness, and behavior change are crucial in fighting HIV/AIDS. "The interventions of Social work are as followed to prevent problems by knowing the causes of the social need, such as poverty, provision of care, counseling, and support to those affected" (Hall, 2007, p. 60). Furthermore, social workers participate in programs that help decrease the incidence (Hall, 2007).

Education and Training Related to HIV/AIDS

It is projected that the social work profession will keep taking on an important role in the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Studies have shown that schools of social work are training the students adequately to work with the HIV/AIDS population. In course outlines schools of social work have only provided limited amount of information in regards to HIV/AIDS. Additionally, a study found that only 23% of students who are placed in an AIDS related field placement have contact with the HIV/AIDS population. AIDS related course work was not found in 75% of clinical and counseling programs (Koob & Harvan, 2003).

Koob and Harvan (2003) found that 50% of social work schools currently do not have an HIV/AIDS course in the curriculum. Due to the community and students requests schools of social work usually offer HIV/AIDS placements. Students will be more adequately prepared to serve the HIV population by taking a course in HIV/AIDS provided by their social work program. As there is greater amount of contact with this population and issues there will be a greater understanding and acceptance (Koob & harvan, 2003).

Diaz and Kelly (1991) found that many graduate schools of social work are providing training in areas that are pertinent to HIV/AIDS, such as health, mental health care systems, practice with minority population, and substance abuse. Such training provides the basic clinical and human services framework relevant to working with people with HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, MSW programs offer students no training in primary prevention. The lack of training for students indicates that they are not prepared to assist clients in AIDS risk assessment, education, and prevention services, and behavioral change approaches. Such skills are vital not only in the areas of AIDS, but also in other health care promoting issues such as smoking cessation and breast self-examination.

Additionally more than half of the programs address HIV/AIDS with only a single lecture or do not address the topic at all. The lack of attention in a majority of programs implies that many students will not have the opportunity to gain experiences or become comfortable in working with people affected by HIV/AIDS. Increasing instruction concerning HIV/AIDS could serve to increase student feelings of competence and offer students the

option to address their own feelings and attitudes while in training rather than when they enter the practice.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic points to the need for skilled, focused social workers. The role of education cannot be ignored, since it is a vital available weapon in treatment, prevention, and control of the spread of HIV/AIDS. Educators are in a critical position to encourage, and improve curricula to focus on the serious problems encountered by persons with HIV/AIDS. Social work educators can make a major contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS, by sharing experiences and teaching students through a course on HIV/AIDS (Miller & Dane, 1990). Furthermore, the study indicated that more training, experiences, and HIV/AIDS related education would enhance their comfort and effectiveness in working with HIV/AIDS patients.

An elective seminar on AIDS offered at one institute helped first year medical students overcome their fear about the disease, and understand the complex approach to a complex issue. A similar strategy should be offered in social work schools and as part of in service training activities at work sites (Wiener & Siegel, 1990).

Attitudes Related to HIV/AIDS

While social workers begin to provide more services to the HIV/AIDS population, evaluating attitudes towards the disease becomes essential. Depending on the level education and cultural background of social worker can determine how they perceive the HIV/AIDS population. Studies have found mixed findings when measuring the relationship between HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitude towards the disease among college students (Soliman & Miah, 1998). Royse et al. (as cited in Soliman & Miah, 1998) found that having knowledge about AIDS increased empathy towards the AIDS population in undergraduate students. Moreover, attitudes towards the HIV disease remained the same when knowledge on HIV increased in college students (Soliman & Miah, 1998).

Studies have found social workers that are trained on HIV/AIDS are more willing to work with PLHWA. As social workers gain more knowledge in HIV/AIDS they are more likely to feel more confident and provide quality services to the PLHWA. Additionally having more knowledge and contact with HIV patients causes social workers to feel less fearful (Soliman & Miah, 1998).

Theoretical Frameworks

The theory that will guide this study is the Empowerment Theory.

Empowerment Approach refers to the empowerment of people through the life of individuals, families, groups, and communities to develop potential and assets to change the environment and make it fairer. The empowerment approach makes connections between social and economic injustice and pain and suffering. Using the empowerment theory as a unifying framework, which presents an integrative, holistic approach to meeting the needs of the members of oppressed groups. (Turner, 2011, p. 159)

According to Beeker, Guenther-Grey, and Raj (1998) the fields of community psychology and public health have utilized empowerment principles in HIV prevention. Many health professionals are utilizing the empowerment approach. Using this approach helps professionals empower patients to be responsible over their own health, it also empowers communities to take measures to improve their quality of life. Thus, the empowerment theory will guide this study to help the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Summary

This chapter covered the importance of prevention and awareness of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the social work profession. Increasing prevention and awareness of HIV/AIDS in the social work profession will decrease the incidence of transmission. Education and training in HIV/AIDS is also mentioned in this chapter as an important tool, in order have competent social workers working with the HIV/AIDS population. Offering additional education and training in HIV/AIDS to MSW students will entitle them to have a greater understanding and acceptance of the HIV/AIDS population. Lastly, this chapter covered the attitudes of social workers on HIV/AIDS. It is clear that having training and education on HIV/AIDS, social worker will be more willing to work with the HIV/AIDS population.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter will outline the methodology used in this study. It includes a description of the dependent and independent variables, research design, methods of sample collection, data collection, instrumentation used for data collection, procedures, and data analysis.

Study Design

The purpose of this research study is to examine graduate level social work students, knowledge, attitudes, and education related to HIV/AIDS and their willingness to provide services to people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA). The study also measured student's feelings about adding an HIV/AIDS course into the Master of Social Work curriculum. Subjects were selected from California State University, San Bernardino School of Social Work. In addition, this study (a) examined the relationship between knowledge of HIV/AIDS disease and willingness to work with PLWHA in graduate level social work students; (b) measure the attitudes of graduate level social work students with regard to providing

services to PLWHAS; (c) identifying graduate level social work student perceptions of incorporating a HIV/AIDS course into the graduate curriculum.

This study had a research question instead of a hypothesis, in order to explore the attitudes, knowledge, and perceptions of MSW students. How well prepared are MSW student in working with the HIV/AIDS population?

The study used a quantitative research approach using a descriptive design survey in order to measure attitudes, knowledge, and education towards PLWHA; that might correlate with the willingness of students to provide services to PLWHA.

A limitation of this research design was an unequal male to female sample. MSW students are primarily female therefore the data will lack the male perspective on this issue. Another limitation in the study is the assumption that the positive correlation between education and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS will cause positive attitudes on students working with PLWHA. This can be a limitation due to student's stigmas with working with PLWHA regardless of the amount and training on HIV/AIDS

Sampling

The sample consisted of graduate students enrolled in the MSW program at California State University San Bernardino. The researchers distributed surveys to 140 graduate level social work students. The researchers predicted at least 45 students to participate on the study. The graduate students that participated in the study ranged in regards to gender, age, ethnicity, and enrollment status. This particular sample was chosen to identify if adding a course in HIV/AIDS in the curriculum will prepare students in serving the HIV/AIDS population.

Data Collection and Instruments

This study consisted of two independent variables, education and knowledge, which are ordinal variables. It also consisted of four demographic variables, gender, age, enrollment status, and race/ethnicity, which are nominal variables. Furthermore, this study contained two dependent variables, willingness and attitudes, which are ordinal variables.

The survey questionnaire (Appendix A) was created for this study in order to measure MSW student's attitudes, knowledge, and willingness to work with the

HIV/AIDS population. It has twelve questions related to demographics, social work curriculum, and student's perceptions.

Procedures

The survey packets were placed in graduate level social work student mailboxes. The questionnaire (Appendix A) will take between 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Students were asked to place completed surveys in a box labeled HIV/AIDS survey that will be located in the main office of the school of social work. Survey's could be taken home to complete and were completed within 2 to 4 weeks. The participants were required to be enrolled in the master level social work program and were either full-time first or second year students and part-time students will be first, second or third year students. Once a significant number of surveys are completed and returned, the two conductors of the study gathered the data.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality of the participants was protected. Participants were given an informed consent form and were asked to check a box, in order to

participate in the study. Additionally after completing the survey, participants were given a debriefing statement stating the purpose of the study and contact information for further questions related to the study. Data was stored in a locked desk drawer of the researchers and was kept confidential. Once the researchers enter the data into SPSS, the surveys were shredded.

Data Analysis

This study used quantitative data analysis techniques. Descriptive statistics including frequency distributions were used to analyze demographic variables such as age, gender, ethnicity, and enrollment status. Additionally, inferential statistics were utilized to examine the relationship between student's knowledge and attitudes in PLWH. The chi-square test was used to assess the associations and relationships between variables. The cross tab was also used.

Summary

This chapter examines the knowledge, attitude, and education of social work students regarding their willingness to work with people with HIV. The sample

consists of 57 social work students from the graduate school of social work. This study is a quantitative research approach using a descriptive survey design. Once surveys were returned by participant's data analysis was completed. The findings of the study provide a better understanding of how well prepared MSW students are in providing services to the HIV/AIDS population. The sample of this study consisted of social work students that were currently enrolled at California State University San Bernardino in the masters' program.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of the study comprised of the responses of fifty-seven participants from Cal State San Bernardino. These findings are represented by the following tables. A summary of results will also be included.

Presentation of the Findings

Demographics Characteristics of Participants

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. There were a total of 57 participants consisting of 54 female and 3 males in the study sample. The age range of the sample is 22 to 61 years and the mean age of the participants is 35 years. Approximately half of the participants (43%) are between the ages of 22 and 30, 26 % are between 31 and 40, 19% are between 41 and 50, and 11% are between 51 and 61 years of age. There are 30% of participants that identified as Hispanic, 23% identified as African American, 42% were Caucasian, and 51 were Asian Pacific Islander. Enrollment status of the participants is as follow 16% were first year full time,

12% first year part time, 26% were third year part time, 33% were second year full time, and 12% were second year part time.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	54	95
Male	3	5
Age		
22-30	25	43
31-40	15	26
41-50	11	19
51-61	6	11
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	17	30
African American	13	23
Caucasian	24	42
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	5
Enrollment Status		
First Year Full Time	9	16
Second Year Full Time	7	12
First Year Part Time	15	26
Second Year Part Time	19	33
Third Year Part Time	7	12

Training and Education in the Master of Social Work Program

Table 2 represents participants' responses in training and education in the MSW program. When participants were asked if the program offered a course in HIV/AIDS, approximately 79% of the participants indicated the program did not offer a course in HIV/AIDS and 18% of the participants indicated that the MSW program offered an HIV/AIDS course. Only 4% of the participants indicated that they did not know the program offered an HIV/AIDS course.

Participants in this study were asked whether the MSW program offered an optional sequence to prepare for working with the HIV/AIDS population. The great majority of the participants (88%) indicated that the program did not offer an optional sequence course to prepare students for HIV/AIDS. More than one half of the participants (55%) indicated that the program did not offer an optional course to prepare students for HIV/AIDS. Only 7% of the participants indicated that they did not know if the program offered an optional course to prepare students for HIV/AIDS.

In response to the third question on having an HIV/AIDS course as a concentration, over two-thirds of the participants (72%) indicated that not applicable. Over one-fourth of the participants (26%) indicated that it was not considered a concentration. Only 2% of the participants indicated that it was considered a concentration. Pertaining to the question on knowledge gained in HIV/AIDS in the program, approximately 77% of the participants indicated that they did not gain any knowledge in the program. Nearly one-fourth of the participants (23%) indicated that they did gain knowledge of HIV/AIDS in the program.

In response to the question relating to taking a course on HIV/AIDS, the great majority of the participants (91%) indicated that they would take a course on HIV/AIDS. Less than 10% of the participants indicated that they would not take a course on HIV/AIDS. Pertaining to the question on having an HIV/AIDS course implemented in the MSW curriculum, the great majority 96% of the participants (96%) indicated that it would help them feel more knowledgeable and prepared. Only 3% of the participants indicated that they would not feel more knowledgeable and prepared.

Table 2. Training and Education in the Master of Social Work Program

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
MSW course in HIV/AIDS		
YES	10	18
NO	45	79
Don't Know	2	4
Optional sequences of course in HIV/AIDS		
Yes	3	55
No	50	88
Don't Know	4	7
HIV/AIDS course a concentration		
Yes	1	2
No	15	26
N/A	41	72
Knowledge gained on HIV/AIDS		
Yes	13	23
No	43	77
Would take a course in HIV/AIDS		
Yes	52	91
No	5	9
HIV/AIDS course implemented in the MSW Curriculum		
Yes	55	96
No	2	3

Preparedness of Master of Social Work Students

Table 3 represents participants' preparedness for working with the HIV/AIDS population. In response to the

first question how prepared MSW students feel to work with the HIV/AIDS population, nearly half of the participants (49%) indicated that they felt fairly prepared, while about one-third 35% of the participants indicated that they felt poorly prepared. More than 10% of the participants indicated that they felt very poorly prepared. Pertaining to the second question of the MSW students' willingness to work with the HIV/AIDS population, the great majority of the participants (91%) indicated that they were willing to work with the HIV/AIDS population. Less than 10% of the participants indicated that they were not willing to work with the HIV/AIDS population.

In response to the third question which measured the students' knowledge in dealing with the HIV/AIDS population, nearly half of the participants (47%) indicated their knowledge was moderate. Less than one-fourth of the participants (23%) indicated that their knowledge was good, and only 16% of the participants indicated their knowledge was poor. Approximately 10% of the participants indicated their knowledge was very poor. Only 3% of the participants indicated their knowledge was very good.

Pertaining to the fourth question the MSW program offers an HIV/AIDS placement, over two-thirds of the participants (72%) indicated that they did not know if the program offered an HIV/AIDS placement. Approximately 16% of the participants indicated that the program did not offer an HIV/AIDS placement. Less than 10% of the participants indicated that the program did offer an HIV/AIDS placement.

Table 3. Preparedness of Master of Social Work Student

Variable	Frequency (N)	Percentages (%)
How prepared are MSW Students		
Highly prepared	2	3
Fairly prepared	28	49
Poorly prepared	20	35
Very Poorly	7	12
Willingness to work with HIV/AIDS population		
Yes	52	91
No	5	8
Knowledge in the HIV/AIDS population		
Very good	2	3
Good	13	23
Moderate	27	47
Poor	9	16
Very poor	6	10

MSW program offer HIV/AIDS placement		
Yes	4	7
No	9	16
don't know	44	72

A chi-square test was conducted to see the relationship between ethnicity and students knowledge on HIV/AIDS gained in a course in the MSW program. Findings were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 8.216$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$). Latinos and African Americans reported they gained less knowledge of HIV/AIDS in courses, while Caucasians were more likely to indicate they gained more knowledge of HIV/AIDS in courses.

Another chi-square test was performed to measure the relationship between ethnicity and the preparedness of MSW students in working with the HIV/AIDS population. Findings were statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 25.57$, $df = 9$, $p < .01$). Compared to African American and Caucasian students, Latino students were likely to report that they felt very poorly prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population. The findings also indicated that MSW students do not feel highly prepared to work with HIV/AIDS population.

Summary

This Study analyzed how well prepared MSW students are in providing services to the HIV/AIDS population. Statistical significance was found when performing the chi-square test. This chapter presents the findings of the study and demonstrates participants' responses for each of the variables studied in table format.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in chapter four. Recommendations for future social work practice, research, limitations, and policy are also discussed in this chapter. Lastly, conclusions from this study will be discussed.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how well prepared graduated students are in providing services to the HIV/AIDS population, and if adding a HIV/AIDS course in the curriculum will help them feel competent in working with the HIV/AIDS population. The study had 57 participants and most of the participants were female (95%). The average age of the participants was 35. All the participants were graduate students either first, second, or third year. While ethnically diverse, 42% of participants were American Caucasian.

The study found that the majority of the participants did not gain any HIV/AIDS knowledge in the program. Although most of the participants did not gain

HIV/AIDS knowledge in the program, the majority of the participants (91%) indicated that it would help them feel more knowledgeable and prepared in working with the HIV/AIDS population if the program offered an HIV/AIDS course. This is consistent with previous research that indicates that school programs of social work do not include HIV/AIDS coursework (Koob & Harvan, 2003). Students are likely to have direct contact with the HIV/AIDS population during their field placements. Learning about HIV/AIDS epidemic in a course offered in their program could benefit them. In past research students confirmed that it was necessary to add a course related to the AIDS epidemic (Miller & Dane, 1990). Additionally Wexler (1989) suggested "social work curricula regarding HIV/AIDS should focus on instilling the knowledge and techniques that will allow students to act in ways consistent with the profession's values" (p. 147). In this study the nearly all participants indicated they would take an HIV/AIDS course if the program offered it. Students in Wexlers (1989) study noticed the need of HIV/AIDS education in social work and conveyed interest in receiving more information in regards to this topic.

Interestingly about fifty percent of participants stated they felt poorly prepared or very poorly prepared in working with the HIV/AIDS population. Therefore this is further consistent with the study finding of Wolf and Mitchell (2002) which found that social service professionals who work with the HIV/AIDS population are not prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population and do not see the need of providing services to this population. Diaz and Kelly (1991) found that half of MSW programs offered students no training in primary prevention. This lack of training suggests that, as students enter practice, they may not be prepared to assist clients in the AIDS-risk assessment, education, preventive services, and risk behavior approaches.

Additionally, more than half of the programs address AIDS topics with only one single lecture, or do not address AIDS topics at all. This lack of attention in a majority of programs implies that many students will not have the opportunity to gain experiences and become comfortable in working with people affected by AIDS. According to Wiener and Siegel (1990), more training, experiences, and AIDS related education would enhance comfort and effectiveness in working with PLWHA.

This study found a relationship between the ethnicity of students and preparedness to work with the HIV/AIDS population. Specifically, Latino and African American students reported that they felt very poorly prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population compared to Caucasian students. In this study minorities felt less prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population. These findings could be possibly due to the knowledge of HIV/AIDS gained in the MSW program. Being that minorities come from less educated backgrounds it could contribute to having less confidence in feeling prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population.

Over the past couple years, the profession of social worker has mainly concentrated on attitudes, knowledge, and practice issues of HIV/AIDS. A great amount of findings have shown a significant correlation between knowledge and positive attitudes toward the HIV population (Koob & Harvan, 2003). According to Koob and Harvan (2003) schools of social work do have an HIV/AIDS course in their curriculum after 20 years of the epidemic. Additionally as a result of students requests there are more than three quarters of HIV/AIDS field placements. Moreover, according to Koob and Harvan (2003)

when the schools of social work offer a course on HIV/AIDS in their curriculum, the topics discussed are usually history, treatment, and prevention.

Limitations

Given the sample size it is difficult to generalize the findings of this study to all graduate social work students on the U.S. Having a greater amount of MSW participants would enhance the generalize ability of this study. As well as having a more diverse sample in regards to ethnicity would help provide more valid findings. Moreover, the population sample was primarily Caucasian. The over representation of females in this study is a limitation as well. Having more male participants would help this study with less biased findings. The questionnaire was self-developed by the two researchers and lacks supporting reliability and evidence. The use of the instrument with unknown reliability and validity compromised the validity of the findings. Additionally, because the amount of first and second year students that participated were not evenly represented in the study, this could cause a misrepresentation of the general sample.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

In regards to the recommendations for social work practice, its important that students, social workers, and faculty members in this field are aware of the lack of knowledge that is gained in this program in regards to working with the HIV/AIDS population. In this study, there was a statistically significant finding that Latinos and African Americans reported that they gained less knowledge in HIV/AIDS in courses taken in the MSW program. Moreover, there was a significant finding that the majority of student would take a course on HIV/AIDS if the program offered it. The recommendation for social work practice is to provide courses in HIV/AIDS in the MSW program in order to help students feel more prepared in working with the HIV/AIDS population.

Future studies should consider looking at knowledge gained in MSW programs that offer an HIV course versus programs that do not offer and HIV course. According to Steiner (1996) to better prepare students in working with the HIV/AIDS population all social work students should receive information about HIV and AIDS. The amount of likely interaction between social workers and people

affected by HIV/AIDS makes AIDS education and training essential for all social work students. The question arises, however, about the best way to integrate this information into the curriculum. Clearly, epidemiological and biological information, as well as material on psychosocial issues, could be presented in a course dedicated solely to AIDS. But most students will not elect such a course. Consequently this content should be integrated into foundation courses in the social work curriculum.

Based on our findings are recommendations for future research is to implement HIV/AIDS content in the MSW curriculum. Additionally, MSW programs should offer placements working with the HIV/AIDS Population. It is crucial to provide students in the MSW Program with trainings and workshops related to HIV/AIDS population.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to assess how prepared MSW students are in providing services to HIV/AIDS population. This study was a quantitative study, which involved the collection of surveys completed by California State University MSW students. The study found

that Latinos and African Americans reported they gained less knowledge of HIV/AIDS in courses, while Caucasians were more likely to gain more knowledge of HIV/AIDS in courses. Also, a significant difference was found in comparing African Americans and Caucasian students, Latino students were likely to report they felt very poorly prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population. The findings also indicated that MSW students do not feel highly prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

MSW HIV/AIDS questionnaire

This study is to find out how well prepared MSW students are to provide services to the HIV/AIDS population. Please answer as honestly as possible. Please check your answer

Demographics

1. What is your current enrollment status in the MSW program?
1. 1st year Full-time _____ 4. 2nd year Full-time _____
2. 1st year Part-time _____ 5. 2nd year Part-time _____
3. 3rd year Part-time _____
2. What is your ethnicity?
1. Hispanic _____ 2. African American _____ 3. Caucasian _____
4. Asian/pacific islander _____ 5. other _____
3. What is your gender
1. Female _____ 2. Male _____
4. What is your age _____

Social Work Curriculum

1. Does your MSW program offer HIV/AIDS placements?
1. Yes _____ 2. No _____ 3. Don't know _____

If yes, how many different placements are offered? _____
2. Does your MSW program offer any courses in HIV/AIDS and social work?
1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
3. Does your MSW program offer an optional sequence of courses for social work students to prepare for the HIV/AIDS field?
1. Yes _____ 2. No _____

If yes, is this considered a concentration?
1. Yes _____ 2. No _____

MSW Students perceptions

1. How would you rate your current knowledge in dealing with the HIV/AIDS population?
1. Very good _____ 2. good _____ 3. moderate _____ 4. poor _____ 5. very poor _____
2. Have you gained any knowledge on HIV/AIDS in courses taken in your current MSW program?
1. Yes _____ 2. No _____
3. How prepared do you feel to work with the HIV/AIDS population once you exit this MSW program?
1. Very Highly prepared _____ 2. Highly Prepared _____ 3. Fairly prepared _____
4. Poorly Prepared _____ 5. Very poorly Prepared _____

4. Are you willing to work with persons with HIV/AIDS?
1. Yes ____ 2. No ____
5. If you had the opportunity to take a course related to HIV/AIDS, would you take the course?
1. Yes ____ 2. No ____
6. Do you think if an HIV/AIDS course would be implemented into your MSW curriculum it would help you feel more knowledgeable and prepared to work with the HIV/AIDS population?
1. Yes ____ 2. No ____

Thank you

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to investigate graduate level social work students', knowledge, attitudes, and education related to HIV/AIDS and their willingness to provide services to people living with HIV. This study is being conducted by Maria Villasenor Perez and April Fernandez under the supervision of Janet Chang, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the school of social work sub-committee of the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The Purpose of this study is to find out how well prepared college students are in providing services to the HIV/AIDS population, and if adding a HIV/AIDS course in the Curriculum will help social work students feel competent in working with HIV/AIDS population

DESCRIPTION: The survey can be completed at home and will have to be completed within 2 to 4 weeks. After completing the survey please return the survey to the main office of the school of social work in a box labeled HIV/AIDS survey.

PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary, refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled, and the subject may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which the subject is otherwise entitled.

CONFIDENTIALITY: No identifying information collected

DURATION: The survey will take 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

RISKS: There are no foreseeable risks to their participation in the research study.

BENEFITS: The anticipated benefit of these procedures is a better understanding the level of preparedness that MSW student entail to serve the HIV/AIDS population.

CONTACT: If you have any questions please contact Janet Chang Professor of Social Work, at (909)537-5184, jchang@csusb.edu

RESULTS: The results of this study could be obtained after the completion of this study. The results will be available at the library.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

SIGNATURE: YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

Mark: _____ Date: _____

. APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing Statement

This study you have just completed was designed to examine graduate level social work students', knowledge, attitudes, and education related to HIV/AIDS and their willingness to provide services to people living with HIV. We are particularly interested in knowing if integrating an HIV/AIDS course into the social work curriculum would help social workers be well prepared, to address the various psychosocial issues that affect these clients and their support system.

Thank you for your participation. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact, Professor Janet Chang at (909) 537-5184. If you would like to obtain a copy of the group results of this study, it would be available at John M. Pfau Library after September 2013.

REFERENCES

- Beeker, C., Guenther-Grey, C., & Raj, A. (1998). Community empowerment paradigm drift and the primary prevention of HIV/AIDS. *Social Science Medicine*, 46(7), 831-842.
- Center of Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). *HIV in the United States: At a glance*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov>
- Diaz, Y. E., & Kelly, J. A. (1991). AIDS-related training in U.S. schools of social work. *Social Work*, 36(1), 38.
- Gilbert, D. J. (2001). HIV-affected children and adolescents: What school social workers should know. *Children & Schools*, 23(3), 135-142
- Hall, N. (2007). We care don't we? Social workers, the profession and HIV/AIDS. *Social Work in Health Care*, 44, 55-77
- Koob, J. J., & Harvan, J. S. (2003). AIDS instruction in US schools of social work: 20 years into the epidemic. *Social Work Education*, 22(3), 309-319.
- Miller, S. O., & Dane, B. O. (1990). AIDS and social work: Curricula development in an epidemic. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 26(2), 177-186.
- Steiner, S. J. (1995). Understanding HIV and AIDS: Preparing students for practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 31(3), 322-336.
- Soliman, H. H., & Miah, M. R. (1998). A cross-cultural study of social work students attitudes toward AIDS policy: Implications for social work education. *International Social Work*, 41(1), 39-52.
- Turner, F. (2011). *Social work treatment: Interlocking theoretical approaches* (5th ed.). New York: The Free Press.

- Wexler, S. (1989). Social welfare students and aids: A survey of knowledge, attitudes, and professional preparation. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 3(1), 131-149.
- Wiener, L. S., & Siegel, K. K. (1990). Social workers' comfort in providing services to AIDS patients. *Social Work*, 35(1), 18-25.
- Wolf, M. S., & Mitchell, C. G. (2002). Preparing social workers to address HIV/AIDS prevention and detection: Implications for professional training and education. *Journal of Community Health*, 27(3), 165-180.

ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

Team Effort: April Fernandez &
Maria Villaseñor-Perez

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

Team Effort: April Fernandez &
Maria Villaseñor-Perez

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: April Fernandez &
Maria Villaseñor-Perez

b. Methods

Team Effort: April Fernandez &
Maria Villaseñor-Perez

c. Results

Team Effort: April Fernandez &
Maria Villaseñor-Perez

d. Discussion

Team Effort: April Fernandez &
Maria Villaseñor-Perez