

# *Knowledge and awareness of non-occupational HIV post exposure Prophylaxis at Stellenbosch University.*

**Student: Nondumiso Ginindza-Ncube**

**Supervisor: Jack Meintjies, Lumbwe Chola**

**Background:** Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection is a worldwide problem, with 68% of infected people residing in sub-Saharan Africa. Antiretroviral therapy is used as post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent infection in cases of occupational exposure, and use has recently been expanded to nonoccupational exposure. Studies have demonstrated a lack of awareness of non-occupational PEP (NOPEP) in the general population.

**Aim:** The aim of this study was to evaluate knowledge and attitudes towards availability of, access to and use of NO-PEP amongst first- and second-year medical students.

**Setting:** Participants were medical undergraduates of Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape of South Africa who were registered in 2013.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study of 169 students was performed. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires handed out in a classroom in August 2013. Self-reported knowledge and attitudes towards NO-PEP and barriers to access to and use of NO-PEP were analysed using frequency tables. Associations between self-reported and

objective knowledge of NO-PEP were analysed by odds ratios.

**Results:** Over 90% of students had good knowledge on HIV transmission, and about 75% knew how it can be prevented. Twenty-eight per cent (n = 47) of students reported knowledge of NO-PEP; 67% reported hearing about it from lecturers, whilst 1% reported hearing about it from their partner. Students who knew the correct procedure to take when a dose is forgotten were 2.4 times more likely to report knowledge of NO-PEP than those who did not know what to do when a dose is forgotten ( $p = 0.029$ ). No other associations were statistically significant.

**Conclusion:** Students had positive attitudes towards the use of NO-PEP and also identified barriers to its use. Despite good knowledge of HIV prevention and transmission, knowledge on NO-PEP was poor.

## **Public Citation:**

Ncube NBQ, Meintjies WAJ, Chola L. Knowledge and attitudes of non-occupational HIV post-exposure prophylaxis amongst first- and second-year medical students at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. *Afr J Prm Health Care Fam Med.* 2014;6(1), Art. #665, 9 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/phcfm.v6i1.665>