DIFFERENCES IN HIV/AIDS KNOWLEDGE BETWEEN HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO USE AND DO NOT USE REAL-TIME TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract: Numerous studies have shown that college students report high knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention; yet unprotected sex, peer pressure, alcohol, and other factors continue to place college students at increased risk for contracting HIV. Therefore, new measures are required to study shifting trends and patterns of this epidemic among minority students. This study examined the characteristics of students attending a historically Black college or university (HBCU) who do and do not use real-time as well as whether HBCU students who seek health information online through websites such as Twitter and Facebook report higher HIV knowledge scores than HBCU students who do not. The health belief model and communication theory were used to support the research study. Three sets of survey questionnaires that covered HIV knowledge, sexual behavior, and demographic items were administered to 350 students during class hours. Results show that 90% of study participants are users of real-time technology; and chi square analysis indicated no significant differences between real-time technology users and non-users based on demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, employment, marital status). $T$ test for equality of means revealed no significant differences in HIV knowledge between real-time technology users and non-users, although those who use real-time technology are more likely to seek out information related to their vulnerability to HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Implications for positive social change include identification of the potential for use of real-time technology to increase awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention among young adults, especially HBCU students. Ultimately, use of real-time technology could help reduce risk for HIV/AIDS transmission.

Key words: HIV/AIDS, Real-Time Technology, College Students, Historically Black Colleges and University, Health Promotion, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube