

Applied Research Partnerships with Developing and Transition Countries

Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities of Teacher Education

Project title

Predictors of HIV-protective behaviours in adolescents and young adults in Costa Rica

Thematic focus

HIV/AIDS; protective behaviour; young adults; prevention

Year

2012

Project location

Costa Rica

Swiss Institution

University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland
School of Social Work (HSA FHNW)
Olten, Switzerland

Partner Institution

Universidad Libre de Costa Rica (ULICORI)
Escuela de Trabajo Social
San José, Costa Rica



Description

In the light of scarce and reluctant HIV prevention efforts in Costa Rica, this cooperative HIV research project aims to establish predictors for HIV-protective behaviours among young men and women aged between 15 and 25 years. Underpinned by the theoretical framework of the extended Information-Motivation-Behavioural Skills- Model (IMB Model), the research project will explore the following questions:

- What HIV prevention information, motivation, behavioural skills and resources do men and women aged between 15 and 24 in Costa Rica possess and which factors are barriers to condom use?

- Does a contextualised, extended IMB Model predict condom use in this population?
- Are variables predicting condom use different in sub-populations, such as in men vs. women, adolescents vs. young adults, in men having sex with men, migrants or in rural vs. urban contexts?

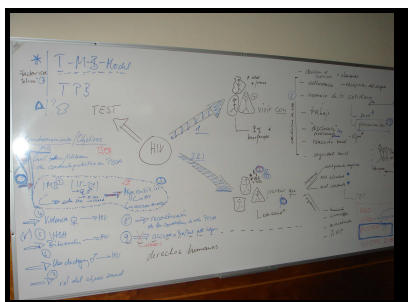
A mixed methods design will be used combining a qualitative exploratory investigation with a subsequent, standardized quantitative survey.

Findings will contribute to underpin the development of sound prevention offers for adolescents and young adults in Costa Rica.

Development relevance

This project's outcomes make a contribution to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 6: "Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases". Costa Rica's response to the HIV epidemic has been tardy, fragmentary and prevention stands on thin scientific grounds. Costa Rica has scarcely been advancing its HIV/AIDS research.

The country therefore urgently needs a social research base in order to develop and implement targeted prevention that is appropriate for the country's particular circumstances (culturally relevant intervention) and contributes to a move in direction of MDG 6.



Seminar room at ULICORI, San José: Preparing the cooperative research project



Edificio tres, ULICORI, San José

KFH

Rektorenkonferenz der Fachhochschulen der Schweiz
Conférence des Recteurs des Hautes Ecoles Spécialisées Suisses
Conferenza dei Rettori delle Scuole Universitarie Professionali Svizzere
Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

Main features of the project

Background

In Costa Rica, essential aspects of the dynamics underlying the country's HIV epidemic are not yet understood, especially the sexual and protective behaviours of young women and men aged between 15 and 24. Reliable descriptive and explanatory knowledge on sexual and preventive behaviours (condom use) among this sexually most active population is required. Notably, its absence is due to a lack of social research capacity in this field. Up-to-date social research investigations into protective behaviours are needed. This project proposes a capacity building effort in Costa Rica as a sustainable response to this need.

Objectives and Research questions

Based on this background, this cooperative HIV research project aims to establish predictors for HIV-protective behaviours among young men and women aged between 15 and 25 years and to test a contextualised, extended Information-Motivation-Behavioural Skills-Model (IMB Model).

Underpinned by the theoretical framework of the extended IMB Model, developed in research in European countries, the proposed research project will explore the following questions:

- What HIV prevention information, motivation, behavioural skills and resources do men and women between 15 and 24 in Costa Rica possess and which factors are barriers to condom use?
- Does a contextualised, extended IMB Model predict condom use in this population?
- Are variables predicting condom use different in sub-populations, such as in men vs. women, adolescents vs. young adults, in men having sex with men, migrants or in rural vs. urban contexts?

Methodology

The study has a mixed methods design combining a qualitative exploratory investigation with a subsequent, standardised quantitative survey.

The qualitative component is designed to identify barriers to condom use in the subject population and to establish categories important for the contextualisation of the extended IMB Model. 25-30 participants will be interviewed in personal face-to-face interviews using the problem-centred interview technique. Interview data will be analysed by open coding (Grounded Theory).

The quantitative component is to test an extended IMB model contextualised on the basis of the findings of the qualitative research. A total of 665 men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 will be surveyed using a standardised questionnaire - administered either in form of a paper-and-pencil questionnaire or a standardised personal interview. Data will be analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics.

Recruitment for the qualitative and quantitative phases of the investigation will proceed in collaboration with partner organisations in the youth work field and schools in order to get access to eligible persons in schools, organised settings of youth work, contexts of sport and leisure activities, at informal meeting places and using social media and virtual dating platforms.

Relevance of the project

The project tests an innovative theoretical model and contributes to filling gaps in the research conducted in this area to date. Findings will be disseminated through targeted activities and underpin the development of sound and up-to-date, culturally relevant prevention offers for adolescents and young adults in Costa Rica. Further, the cooperation supports capacity building in the partner university.

