

УДК 616.98:578.828ВІЛ:615.477.86:612.6.06]-053.6(477)”2007”

Was HIV knowledge associated with condom use at first sex among Ukrainian teenagers in 2007?

Чи пов'язана обізнаність про ВІЛ з використанням презервативу під час першого статевого зв'язку серед підлітків України у 2007 році?

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BACKGROUND. Condoms offer the best protection against sexually transmitted infections including HIV. In Ukraine, little research has been conducted to explore possible predictors of condom use at sexual debut. It was hypothesized that the more youth know about possible ways of HIV transmission, the more they are likely to use condoms during the first sexual intercourse.

METHODS: Data analyzed in this paper comes from a cross-sectional European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs conducted among Ukrainian school youth in 2007. The survey involved a total of 5122 students (15–17 year old) from all types of secondary

schools in 24 oblasts and AR Crimea. Analysis was confined to 1077 students (715 males and 362 females) who reported that they have ever had sexual intercourse. Associations were assessed in bivariate analysis using Chi-square test and later using binary logistic regression analysis in order to identify the significant predictors after controlling for other variables.

RESULTS: Among the sexually experienced students, more than 70% had used condoms during first sexual intercourse. The results from the logistic regression analysis revealed that the age at first sexual intercourse, HIV awareness, alcohol consumption and family characteristics

were significant predictors of condom use at first sexual intercourse among the Ukrainian schoolchildren. Students who had first sex at the age from 14 to 16 years were more likely to use condom at their first sexual intercourse than those with sexual debut before 14 years old (odds ratios 2,4; 2,1; and 3,3, respectively). Moreover, those students who were aware that using condom may protect against getting HIV were more likely (OR 2,1) to use condom at first sex.

CONCLUSIONS: The results indicate the necessity of providing educational programs which aim to raise the level of awareness about HIV among Ukrainian youth.