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WHAT DO STUDENTS FROM BIALYSTOK UNIVERSITIES KNOW ABOUT SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS?

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Rationale: Sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) are serious public health problem, being acquired by more than 1 million people every day worldwide.

Objective: Asses the knowledge, attitudes, risky behaviors and preventive practices related to STIs among medical and non-medical faculties students from Białystok.

Materials and methods: In 2018 an original anonymous survey was carried among 168 subjects from medical and 142 from non-medical universities. They filled 37 questions: general and specific regarding STI. Statistical analysis was performed using Chi-Square test, statistically significant difference was at $p < 0.05$.

Results and discussion: In the group 80,6% were females and 19,4% males, with a mean age of 26,5 years. Over 73% were sexually active and almost half of them admitted risky sexual behavior in the past. Almost 16% have ever done an examination for STIs. HIV remains the best known STIs, while hepatitis B was known mainly among medical students. Three fourth students knew that STIs could be asymptomatic. Over half of the students knew that vaccinations against STIs were available and 88,6% of them heard about the HPV vaccine. There was statistical significance between the groups regarding the knowledge of diseases transferred sexually, causative agents, history of STI examination, vaccines against STIs.

Conclusions: Nearly all participants from both groups identified HIV as STIs but there are more infections of this kind that should also be recognized. Both groups have indicated the Internet as a source of knowledge about STIs and the need to acquire additional schooling about these diseases, which points out the need of education. To conclude, non-medical students have less awareness about STIs.