

Adolescent Assessments of HIV/AIDS in Jimma Zone

This Policy Brief examines knowledge and perceptions of the prevalence and risk of contracting HIV/AIDS among adolescent boys and girls by participation in youth clubs.

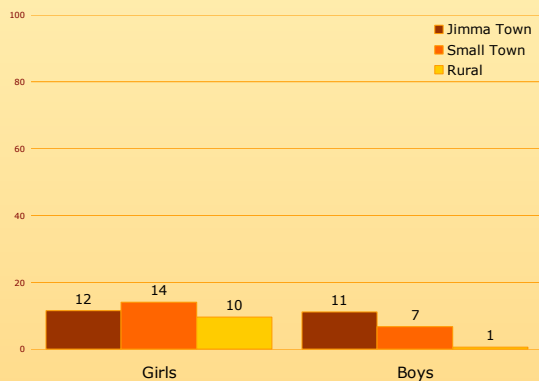
Based on data from Round 1 (September 2005-March 2006) of the Jimma Longitudinal Family Survey of Youth

Adolescents' perceptions of the likelihood that they will contract HIV are based in part on their knowledge of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among their age peers.

Because risk taking and HIV prevalence levels will vary substantially by social groups and friendship networks, some youth may have very unrealistic perceptions of their risk of contracting HIV.

For this reason, considerable programmatic efforts have been placed on developing HIV/AIDS awareness and information programs that target youth. Youth clubs are a particularly important intervention that is being promoted to educate youth about the risks of HIV/AIDS.

The following figures and tables summarize key aspects of adolescent knowledge and perceptions in Jimma Zone.



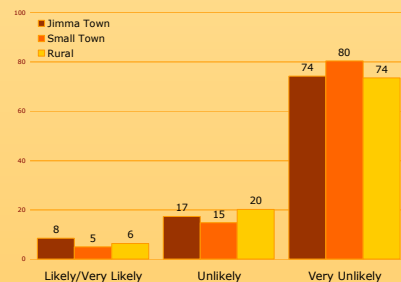
Percent Who Know of a Peer with HIV or AIDS

Knowledge of at least one peer in their age group who has HIV or AIDS is greater among girls than boys, with the greatest differences in rural areas.

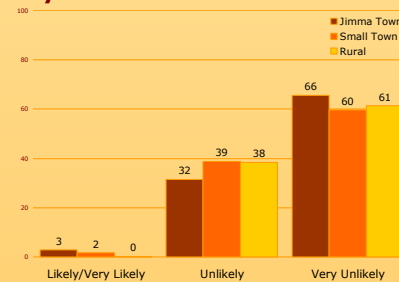
Between 10% and 14% of girls in the JLFSY study area report knowing of at least one peer with HIV/AIDS.

Among boys, reported knowledge of at least one peer with HIV/AIDS is highest in Jimma Town (11%), is lower in the small towns (7%), and is effectively non-existent in the rural areas.

Girls



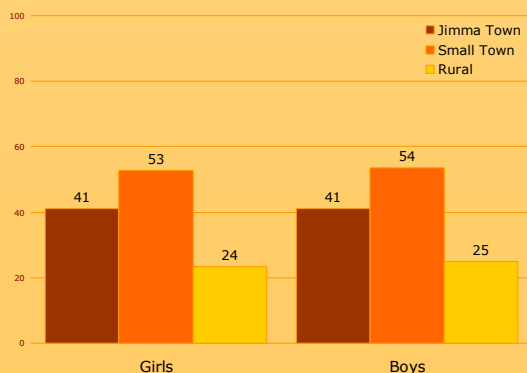
Boys



Self-Perceptions of the Likelihood of Getting HIV/AIDS

Girls are much more likely than boys to perceive themselves as being at either a high or a very low risk of HIV.

Boys are much more likely than girls to see themselves at some risk of HIV, but in contrast to girls they see that risk as being small.



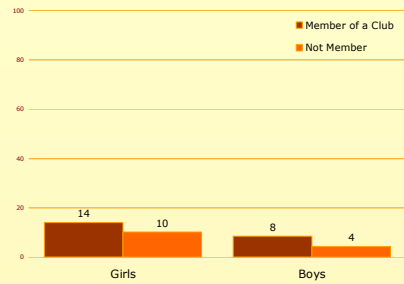
Percent Who Belong to a Youth Club

Membership in some type of youth club or group is relatively common in Jimma Zone and ranges from around one-quarter of the youth in rural areas to one-half of the youth in towns.

Levels of participation in youth clubs or groups are roughly the same for boys and girls.

Club Membership and Likelihood of Knowing a Peer with HIV/AIDS

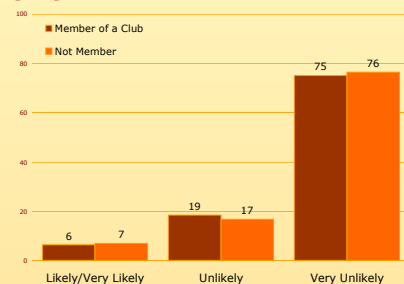
Membership in a club does appear to be related to a greater likelihood of knowing at least one peer with HIV/AIDS.



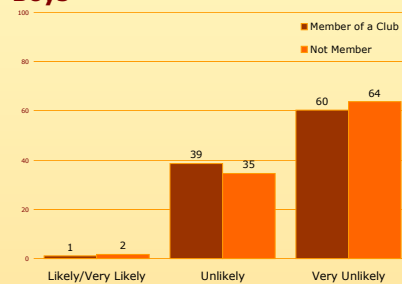
Club Membership and Perception of Likelihood of Getting HIV/AIDS

Membership in a club does not appear to be related to perceptions of the risk of contracting HIV.

Girls



Boys



Conclusions and Recommendations

Youth clubs offer a highly effective method for educational outreach to youth. Participation in youth clubs and groups is widespread in Jimma Town and in the small urban and rural Jimma Zone.

The level of participation in clubs is the same for boys and girls, but the different sexes have developed very different perceptions of their personal risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Boys are less likely than girls to perceive themselves at a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. More effective messages that target males need to be developed to raise awareness that the risks of contracting HIV are real.

Youth clubs have not yet realized their full potential to educate youth about the risks of HIV/AIDS.

Subsequent rounds of the JLFSY will explore in-depth sexual behavior, risk taking, and perceptions of the HIV risk among youth, as well as the types of clubs in which youth participate.

The Jimma Longitudinal Family Survey of Youth

The Jimma Longitudinal Family Survey of Youth (JLFSY) began in 2005. It is representative of Jimma Town, the small towns of Yebu, Serbo, and Sheki, and nearby rural areas. The stratified sample includes 3500 households and 2100 boys and girls ages 13 to 17, yielding about 700 adolescents each for Jimma Town, the small towns, and the rural areas. Household data were collected from the household head or the spouse of the head. Adolescents were directly interviewed. Questionnaire data were collected by trained interviewers in the Amharic and Oromifa languages.



Jimma Zone in Ethiopia

The JLFSY is an interdisciplinary effort by specialists in epidemiology, community health, biostatistics, demography, sociology, and economics. The study examines critical challenges that youth face such as health, education and training, employment and earnings, forming families, and becoming productive citizens. A special focus of the study is on key sources of support for youth as they meet these challenges including parent and kin investments, household resources, parent and kin guidance, local community infrastructure, and informal support networks.

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This research is being conducted by faculty and students affiliated with the **Partnership in Improving Reproductive Health**