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IMPACT AND RISK OF INSTITUTIONALIZED ENVIRONMENTS ON THE PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIV-POSITIVE YOUTH

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Abstract

The purpose of the research is to highlight the impact of two aspects defining personal identity: the HIV/AIDS status and family background, on the individual self esteem of young people having grown up in a family or an orphanage environment.

We evaluated 93 young people from families and placement centers, both HIV-positive and HIV-negative, for a period of 12 months, from January to December 2013. We used the Self Esteem Inventory to evaluate their overall self esteem, as well as their social, family and school self esteem.

The age of the young people evaluated was between 14 and 25 years, with a mean age of 20.48 years; 33 of them were male (35.48%) and 60 female (64.51%); 49 individuals came from a family environment (52.6%), while 44 from placement centers (47.3%). More than half (53.7%) were attending or have graduated from high school. In 25.8% of cases, education was limited to primary school (4-8 grades), and we reported two cases of home-schooling. A percent of 18.27 of all young people had higher education, attending university or post-high school classes. Overall, self esteem is significantly lower in HIV-infected subjects from placement centers. The same goes for social self esteem. In family and school self esteem, the results are variable, depending on the influence that the HIV status and the growing up environment have on the young people.

Growing up in a placement center impacted negatively on the development of self esteem in young people, regardless of their health status. When adding to this situation a chronic disease such as HIV/AIDS, the proper emotional development of youth is even more endangered. This situation needs to be analyzed in order to fully support the development of all youth.

Key words: environment, HIV/AIDS, placement center, school, self esteem

Received: February, 2013; Revised final: October, 2014; Accepted: October, 2014

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