

Adolescents who live on the streets:

vulnerability to HIV/AIDS related to drugs, prostitution and violence

Objective: This qualitative study investigated the vulnerability to HIV/AIDS among adolescents who live on the streets, and are involved in prostitution, drugs and violence, in Santo André City (Brazil).

Methods: from december 2003 to january 2004, seven respondents were recruited using youth key informants. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Blood was drawn to determine syphilis, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV status:

Results: Six youths were positive for syphilis, one was HIV positive and one was HIV undetermined. The findings highlighted that history of domestic violence, rape, curiosity to life on street, assertion of sexuality, drug abuse

current and deprived socioeconomic conditions of families were among the factors that led higher vulnerability to HIV.

Conclusion: The association among these factors increased individuals' vulnerability to HIV and STD diseases. There is a need for strategies involving outreach work and that take into account individual singularities.

Key words: Street children and youth, sexually transmitted disease/STD, HIV, prostitution, substance-related disorders.

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