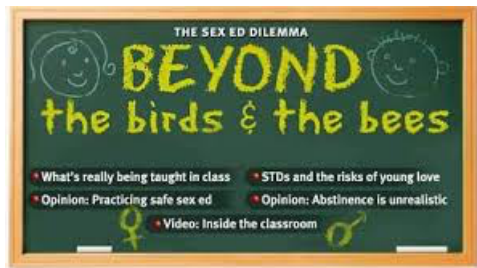


# The significance of sex education in schools in developing healthy sexuality and HIV/STI awareness and prevention among adolescents in Vienna - A prospective study in two parts: **exploratory** and **randomised-control**.



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# Aims

- What components in sex education are needed to make HIV/STI prevention more effective and relevant to today's youth?
- What is their knowledge or experiences on sexuality, HIV/STI, and perception of sex education and information, and how do socio-demographic factors affect this?
- How does the educational intervention offered by the AIDS Hilfe Wien change the level of HIV/STI awareness among adolescents, their risk-perception and their attitude towards people living with HIV (PLHIV)?

# Methodology

- **Part 1 (Exploratory)**
  - **Interviews**
  - **Survey** of adolescents from 4<sup>th</sup> grade of secondary school (4. Kl.)
- **Part 2 (Randomised control)**
  - Evaluation of HIV prevention workshop for 4. Kl students
  - Questionnaire at three time points
- **Inclusion criteria (surveys)**
  - Male/female students attending middle schools, vocational schools and high schools
  - Participants 14-16 years
- **Exclusion criteria (surveys)**
  - Students attending International schools
  - Participants > 16 years

# Methodology

- **Part 1 : Interviews**
  - Semi structured one-one interviews ( $\approx$  30 min.)
  - Four basic questions
  - Adolescents (14-16 years), and professionals: gynaecologists, paediatricians, youth social workers, teachers, HIV prevention consultants and parents
  - Around 16 participants

# Methodology

- **Part 1: Survey**
  - 70-item questionnaire from a similar Swiss study
  - Questions comprise four themes that address perception of sex education in schools
  - Middle schools, vocational schools and high schools will be selected from different districts in Vienna
  - Around 200 adolescent participants from 4. Kl.

# Statistical Analysis

- **Part 1**
  - Interviews recorded, transcribed
  - Content analysis used to identify major themes
  - Survey: Scores determined on a 5-point scale; mean scores calculated for each category within each question and reported as percentages

# Part 1: Results (Interviews)

## knowledge and experience on sexuality and HIV/STIs

### ESI (Early) Sexual Initiation <15y:

- law allows sex from age 14
- Nevertheless, ESI has not significantly lowered according to German studies
- But age of menarche is decreasing

### Homosexuality:

- is not well-understood or accepted

### Information on HIV/STIs:

- Mainly taught in Biology and fact-oriented
- still unsure about how HIV is transmitted or what HPV is

*Then we also talk about the things that everybody says.. that...you have to have your first time (sexual début) with 14...that that's not true –BT*

*It's still so that a little more than half of 15-16 year olds have their first sex, even if society has opened up in the last few decades and sexuality is everywhere – ER*

*Even in primary schools now, there are a few children experiencing their first menarche. This was (in the seventies) hardly ever below 11 years -ER*

*as far as I can remember, this theme in school took about an hour... and then it was over –P1*

*Our societal structure is such that it's still as always a taboo – homosexuality – in our society; that's how I see it. But so many of my friends say, "Oh god, I hope my son will not be gay. That's the worst thing that could happen"; especially with strongly Roman Catholic-oriented families – P2*

*If you show pictures in a biology book, you can hardly transfer it to real life –ER*

*We still had the questions 'Can I get HIV by a mosquito bite?' 'Can I get HIV if I'm using the same glass?' - ER*

*They have absolutely no clue what it (HPV) is about. They just took the vaccinations because they were told (by me) that they have to - P2*

# Part 1: Results (Interviews)

## perception of sex education and information

### Pornography:

images often don't fit with body or expectations;  
verbal aggression;  
lack of proper discussion;  
should be able to reflect on the reality of it and discuss its controversies

### Sex education defined:

the reproductive system and bodily changes;  
positive emotions and well-being and making informed decisions

*with all this pornography, it's even harder to stand up for the things that the kids like and what they don't like, and not be made to make stuff that they don't want when they start having sex – SW*

*sexuality is used to mob and to ridicule and to abuse, "You bitch, you whore, you I don't know what.." why must it always be associated as such? – P2*

*the boys were watching pornography, and the mothers of the girls were shocked. And then there's an assortment of mobbing going on in their Whatsapp group...from the girls about the boys – P2*

*We basically should be able to reflect with young people so that they can cope with that kind of information - ER*

*well we had a few basic themes like...how a baby is created... about menstruation...- S1*

*...it was only about how conception functions – P2*

*In the way of health education – to know what is good for my body and for my personal well-being. So we (should) put it in a context that is much more than 'sexual intercourse' -ER*



# Part 1: Results (Interviews)

components in sex education needed to make sex education and HIV/STI prevention more effective and relevant

- Sex education should start as early as possible, as it is not just about puberty and relationships
- There should be more real-life and frank discussions on various themes in sexuality
- Ideas for a more effective approach include repetition of information and specific teacher-training

*it is an on-going theme to be aware of and comfortable with one's own body, or also what possibilities gender identities give... in my opinion really important to implement already in primary school – SW*

*I just don't know if it's the right age at which the children are taught this, because it's the age when they start puberty and start to become critical about their own bodies. And then comes all this information, which is only funny and embarrassing at the same time. So I don't know if the age (12/13) is appropriate – P2*

*Often I think that people are not educated to talk about it (sex), and so they make it very fact-oriented. This is often the point...people can't relate it to their own body. Consequently we're not really helping young people to understand, feel or know about it – ER*

*...homosexuality or something like that...could be talked more about – S1*

*...about sexuality, about pleasure, about STIs, condoms and contraception – SW*

*Combine it with emotions and life situations – ER*

*Repeat factual information several times- ER*

*Train teachers specifically in sexuality/health education –ER*

*Punctual answers...not having to wait for the workshop – SW*

*Make counting your period days creative using beaded chains – BT*

*Watching films with an emphasis on pleasure – P2*

# Current status and tasks

- Study protocol, content of surveys, interviews, letters, participant information, parent information, participant and parental consent approved by MUW ethics committee
- School Council of the City of Vienna (Stadtschulrat) has formally approved
- Interviews are under way
- Next step: school survey for **Part 1**

THANK  
YOU SO  
MUCH!