

# Assessing Media as a Gateway to Information

## For College Students Regarding HIV/AIDS

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### INTRODUCTION.

- It is estimated that more than 50% of people living with HIV between the ages of 13 and 24 are unaware of their infection. (Center for Disease Control, 2015)
- This demographic consists of 26% of all new reported HIV infections and considered to be the “center of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.” (World Health Organization, 2015)
- Social media and smartphone use allow information to be delivered to precise target populations faster than ever. (Ramallo et al, 2015)
- Positive Link, south-central Indiana’s HIV/AIDS care provider, has identified access to information as one of the most pressing issues facing healthcare providers today.

### RESEARCH QUESTION.

How do students of at a small Midwestern university use media to access information on prevalence, transmission, and prevention of HIV/AIDS?

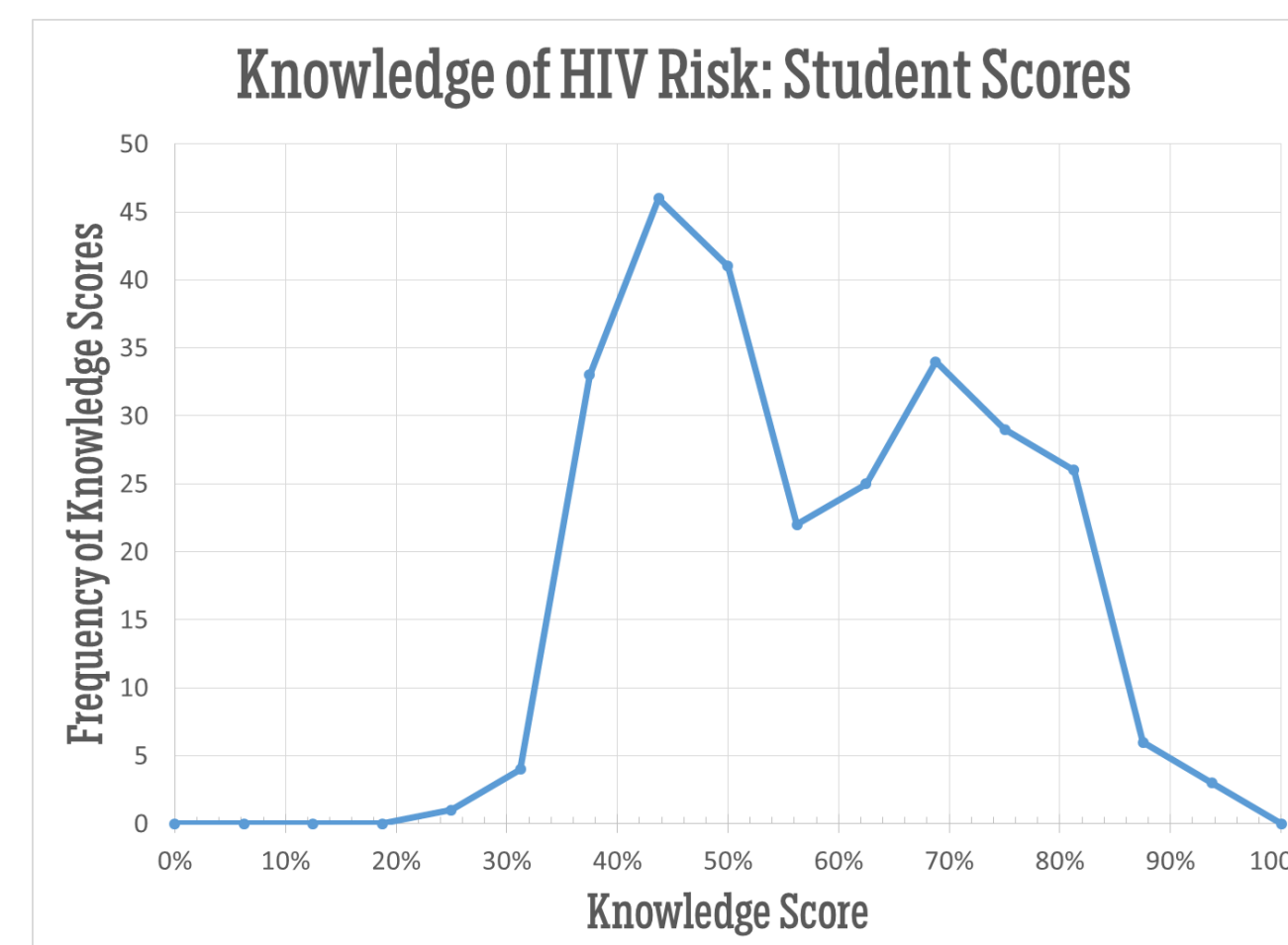
### METHODOLOGY.

- Simple random sample of 287 classes held on campus.
- 50 classes were sampled of which 25 participated.
- More than 1 in 6 enrolled students completed questionnaires.
- Strong focus on anonymity of survey respondents.
- Convenience sampling produced 20 students who had not taken the questionnaire and were willing to participate in an interview.
- Of the convenience sample, six interviewees were selected at random.

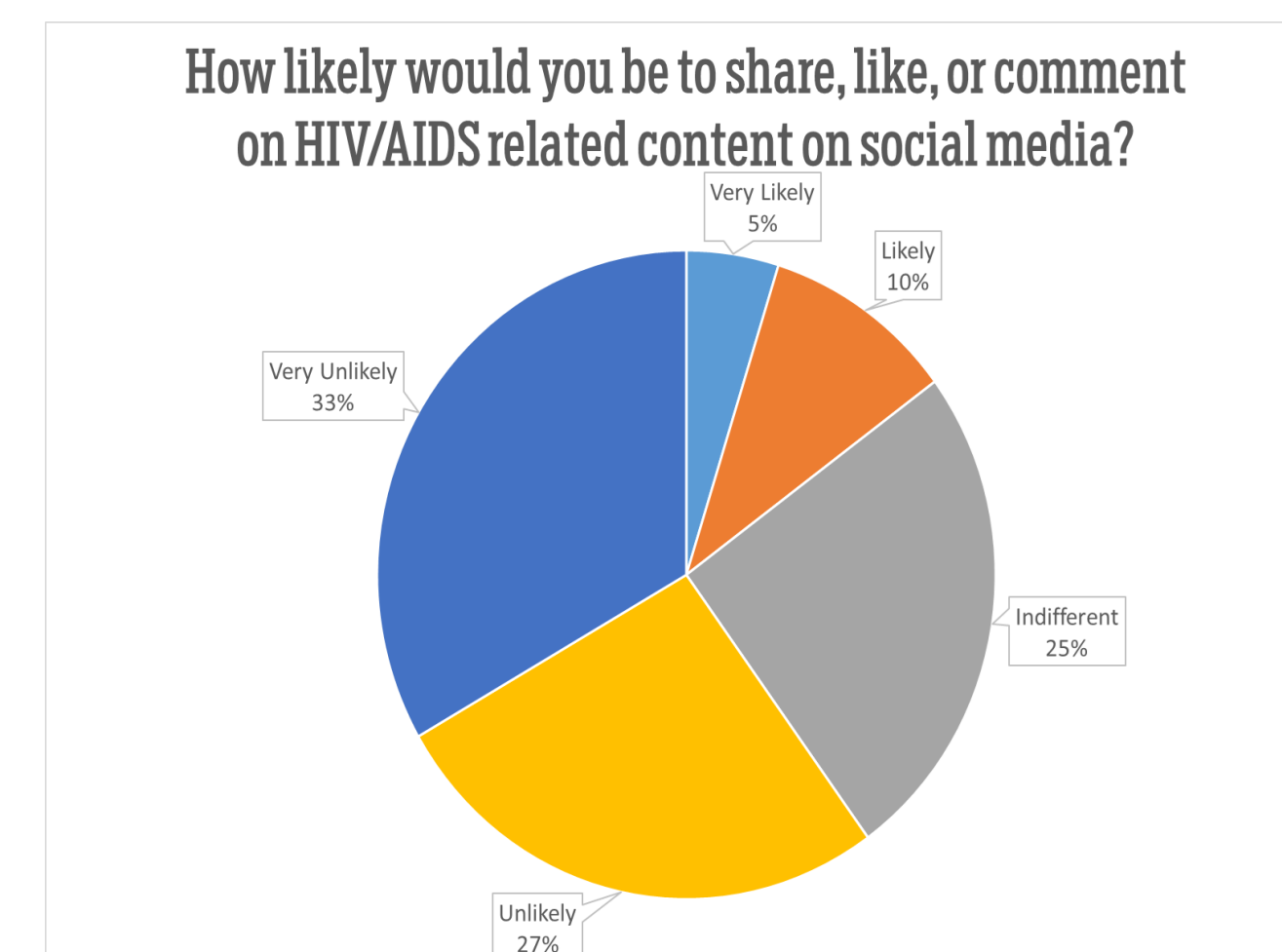
### DEMOGRAPHICS.

- **271** Respondents
- **18-55** years old
- **79.1%** Christian
- **61.3%** female
- **43.9%** with annual household income <**\$50,000**
- **43.1%** Republican
- **34.3%** College Freshman
- **25.4%** have tested for HIV
- **23.1%** Democrat
- **21.8%** Independent
- **16.2%** reported Rx abuse
- **8.1%** College Seniors
- **6.6%** LGBTQ
- **1%** used syringes

### RESULTS.

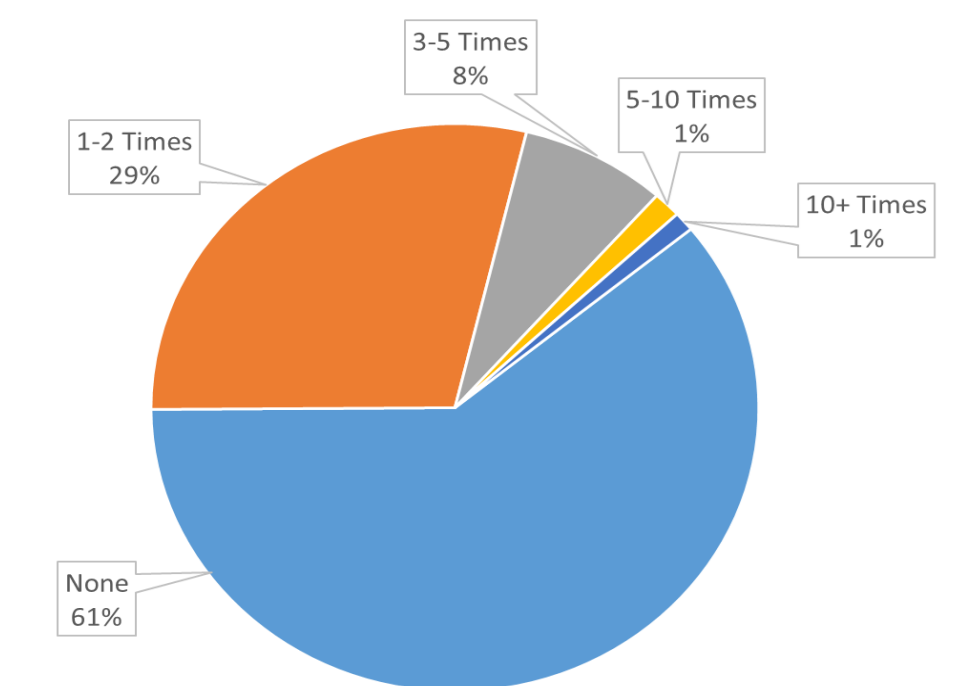


Of all student who completed the questionnaire, it is important to note that no students answered all eight questions correctly in regards to identifying if certain risk behaviors held a 1% chance or greater of transmission, less than 1% chance of transmission, or no chance of transmission. 49.1% of students incorrectly reported that sitting on a public toilet seat held a slight to high level of risk. (n=271)

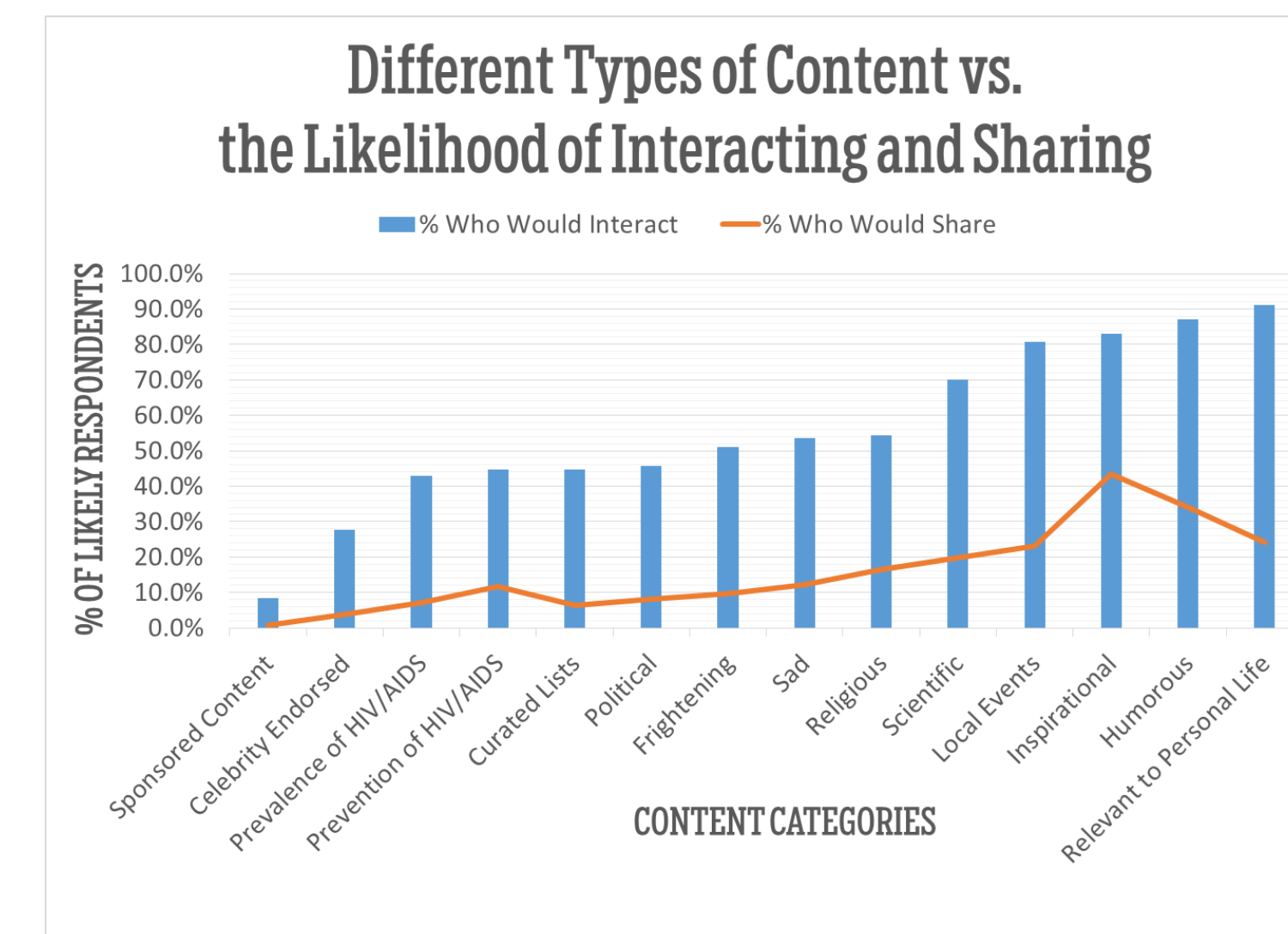


A small minority of students, just 15%, felt that they would likely, or very likely, interact with content related to HIV/AIDS on social media. Well over half of students felt they were unlikely to very unlikely. (n=270)

How many times in the past year have you used the internet to learn more about HIV/AIDS?



Most students have not used the internet to learn more about HIV/AIDS. Due to the wording of this question, it is unclear if students have used other means to research HIV/AIDS within the past year. (n=271)



Interacting, in the context of this graph, consists of clicking or sharing a post. Students are most motivated to share a post if it is Inspirational, Humorous, or Relevant to their life. Inspirational content received the highest ratio of interact to share. Content regarding the Prevalence and Prevention of HIV/AIDS were very unlikely to be interacted with or shared by any measures. (n=270).

### DISCUSSION

Social media may not be the best vessel for facts about HIV/AIDS to be dispersed to the general population, or different tactics are in order. Research seems to show that inspirational messages may hold a key to spreading general information, however it also appears that content pertaining to HIV/AIDS is avoided en masse. Further research should be done to find additional statistical correlations. Additional research should also be allocated to identifying areas in which knowledge can be taught in the classroom; most respondents preferred the topic be taught in person through formal education.

#### References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2015. "HIV Among Youth." Retrieved on January 23, 2016 (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/age/youth/>).
- Ramallo, Jorge et al. 2015. 'Exploring Social Networking Technologies As Tools For HIV Prevention For Men Who Have Sex With Men'. AIDS Education and Prevention 27(4):298-311.
- World Health Organization. 2015. "HIV/AIDS Fact Sheet." Retrieved on January 17, 2016 (<http://www.who.int/hiv/en/>).