

## 15 Percent Of Pupils Would Knowingly Spread HIV: Study

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Fifteen percent of South African school children between the ages of 12-and 17-years would knowingly spread HIV, the SABC reported on Wednesday.

This was revealed in a study of more than 15,000 school children by an international group of epidemiologists based in Canada.

The organisation's Nobantu Marokane said most of the learners who said that they would spread the virus had been abused.

"These learners were not tested so they did not know they were HIV positive. In most cases, these learners have been exposed to some kind of abuse."

This was not necessarily sexual abuse, she said.

"It might not have been sexual abuse but the thinking to say because it happened to me, I might be HIV positive, they were opening themselves up to riskier behaviour by saying that they would spread it intentionally," she said.

The study also revealed that 15 percent of South African school children had been forced to have sex.

"We used forced sex without consent, so they understood the term that this was forced, it was not coercion, it was forced sex without consent and that is the number of our learners that said 'yes, this has happened to me'.

"And for me what is striking is that... this is happening to more boys than girls....," Marokane said.

Source : Sapa /sg/gj

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