

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY QUESTION 705

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Mrs S V Kalyan to ask the Minister of Education:

(1) Whether her department has conducted or commissioned any research to determine the number of learners and/or educators who are infected and affected by HIV/Aids; if not, (a) why not and (b) what information was used to evaluate the impact of HIV/Aids in schools; if so, (i)(aa) by whom and (bb) when was this research conducted and (ii) what were the conclusions;

(2) Whether her department has taken any steps to ensure that educators have access to (a) HIV/Aids testing and counselling services and (b) antiretrovirals for those who are HIV-positive; if not, why not; if so; what steps?

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REPLY:

1. Yes, we have commissioned research (see also WQ 753 NA 8 October 2004). The Educator Labour Relations Council, which comprises the Department of Education and the four unions represented in the bargaining council, commissioned a population-based study of educator supply and demand to determine, among other issues, the prevalence of HIV and AIDS among educators. The study was led by the Human Sciences Research Council and additional research was undertaken by the Medical research Council and the Mobile Task Team based at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The study was started in 2003 and completed in 2005. A number of reports on the study have been published by the HSRC Press, the most recent of which is the integrated report *Educator Supply and Demand in Public Schools* (November 2005).

The Department has not commissioned a study on learner HIV prevalence. However, in 2003 the Department of Health commissioned the Youth Risk Behaviour Survey, which may be repeated this year.

The main findings of the study were:

- The HIV prevalence of 12.7 % among educators was similar to that of the general population.
- Single educators were 2.7 times more likely to be HIV positive than married people.

- Educators residing in rural areas and those working in rural schools were found to have significantly higher HIV prevalence than educators residing in urban areas and teaching in urban schools.
- The HIV prevalence was highest in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga and lowest in the Western Cape and Northern Cape.

2.

- (a) The prevention, care and treatment access programme implemented by the teacher unions and supported by the Department has a voluntary counselling and testing component.
- (b) The DoE does not provide anti-retrovirals for HIV positive educators. Educators are encouraged to join GEMS, the government medical aid scheme. Otherwise educators with HIV/AIDS rely on the government's comprehensive HIV and AIDS care, management, and treatment plan.