

#58: Risk Perception for Contracting HIV: A Principle-Based Concept Analysis
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Aim: Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) has been in the public eye for three decades. The yearly rate of new infections is 50,000. Low risk perception for acquiring HIV contributes to these infections. The aim of this principle-based concept analysis was to determine the state of the science of risk perception in the context of contracting HIV.

Methods: This concept analysis used the principle-based method. PubMed and CINAHL were searched with the terms “risk perception” AND “HIV.” Forty-eight articles were included in the final analysis. The articles were read, after which a table was made to aid in analysis. Then the articles were reread and appropriate bundles of meaning were placed within categories in the table. The columns were then individually summarized.

Results: Risk perception for contracting HIV lacks conceptual clarity. The epistemological principle has not been met; therefore the other principles are compromised as well. A tentative definition was made. Risk perception for contracting HIV is awareness about the possibility of acquiring the disease. This awareness can lead to behavior changes. Risk perception shifts over time. Not all who are at high risk for contracting HIV have a matching high risk perception. Others negotiate or rationalize their risks for contracting HIV.

Conclusions: The concept of risk perception for contracting HIV is a dynamic yet immature concept. Conceptual clarity must be obtained prior to any measurement of the concept. Instruments should be developed to provide a common and consistent measure of HIV risk perception and then tailored interventions can be implemented.