

Zhuravleva L.P.

*Doctor of Psychology, Professor,
Dean of socio-psychological faculty
Zhytomyr State University named after Ivan Franko*

Senkevich V.G.

*PhD student
Department of social and practical psychology
Zhytomyr state University named after Ivan Franko
practical psychologist of the Zhytomyr regional Centre of prophylaxis and
fight against AIDS*

Empirical research of empathy in the structure of youth reactions to the HIV infection risk

In the article the authors make an attempt to empirically verify the relationship between empathy and structural components of the youth reaction to the danger of contracting the HIV. Empathy plays an important role in the structure of moral consciousness of personality. Becoming its value system, it can cause a social and prosocial behaviour, contribute to the security or endanger including forecast trends in assessing the behaviour of young people in the danger of HIV/AIDS.

The psychological essence of such notions as empathy, control of the risk, the strategies of the reaction to risk, the structural components to response to the danger of HIV were specified. It was figured out that the main strategies of the reaction to risk of contracting the HIV are the strategy with the control over the risk of HIV infection (assertiveness strategy and phobic strategy) and the strategy without the control over the risk of HIV (aggressive strategy and ignoring strategy). Maladaptive strategies in protecting against the danger of HIV/AIDS include are phobic strategy, aggressive strategy and ignoring strategy. Alternative strategy, assertiveness strategy, is adaptive protection.

Youth reaction to the dangers of HIV infection is seen by us as affective-cognitive-behavioural process during which empathy strategy and choice reaction

occur simultaneously. Response strategy is the ultimate cumulative assessment of the process of creation and manifestation of reactions of subject to danger.

Empathy is considered by us as an independent process with complex hierarchical levels of manifestation. However, structural components are represented by emotional, cognitive and behavioural components. The emotional component includes the following elements: emotional maturity indicators of subject, one's personal security concerns, emotional coping. The cognitive component includes such elements as the knowledge of the subject of HIV/AIDS; evaluation of the real risk HIV for themselves and for others, cognitive coping. The behavioural component includes the following elements: control of the situation subjective infection rate of HIV and sexual risk prevailing coping strategies.

The list of the following methods was used in the study: "Test empathy for adults" (L.P. Zhuravleva); author's adapted version of "Test empathy for people living with HIV"; "The questionnaire for the study of emotional maturity personality" (O.Ya. Chebykin); "Coping Test" (R.S. Lazarus); "Diagnostics individual coping strategies" (E. Haim); "Methods scales for assessing vulnerability to HIV" (M.M. Dolcini, J.A. Catania); "Methods scales for the assess the situation to avoid HIV infection" ((F.W. Van der Velde); "Methods of evaluation of behavioural risk in heterosexual relationships" (J.A. Kelly); author's adapted "Questionnaire to determine the level of awareness about HIV/AIDS"; author's "Questionnaire experience dangerous behaviour". Additionally, methods of observation, interviews and consultations with experts were used. Statistical data processing was carried out under the use of a linear Pearson correlation and comparison of parametric t-test of Student.

As a result, it was proved that the presence of empathy determines reaction of youth for risk. High empathy promotes safe level of concern, causes greater objectivity in assessing their own risk of infection as well as for the other; it meets the highest indicators of self-regulation, emotional maturity and a higher level of knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Young people with not constructive models of

behavioural coping are more prone to not experience empathy. Integral indicator of empathy is higher if to compare women and men with and without HIV.

Further study of empathy determination of structural components respond to the danger of HIV infection will be a good basis for the development of educational programmes of prevention of risk behaviour of HIV / AIDS in youth and adolescents.

Key words: *empathy, control of the risk of HIV infection, the strategies of the reaction, the structural components to response to the danger of HIV.*