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ASSESSMENT OF THE VIEWS OF SENIOR SCHOOL STUDENTS ON HIV/AIDS IN A STATE IN NORTH CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: Assessment of the view of senior school students on HIV/AIDS was carried out in Offa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria with the aim of investigating the general views of senior school students on HIV/AIDS. Random sampling technique was employed to select 10 schools comprising both public and private schools while purposive method was used to sample 300 biology students across the selected schools. Sharing of blade, needle or any sharp object with another person had higher risk of contracting HIV account for 89.3% of the respondents, followed by casual sex intercourse with an infected person and prostitutes. It is therefore recommended that HIV/AIDS and sex education should be incorporated into the Biology curriculum of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. Also, more emphasis should be made on abstaining from early sexual activities and parents should be encouraged to talk about sex values to their children.

KEYWORDS: HIV/AIDS, Private and Public Schools, Student, Biology Subject, Sex Education, Assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

The acronym AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and is caused by a virus called Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) which is passed from one person to another through sexual and blood to blood contact. In addition, infected pregnant women can pass HIV to their babies during pregnancy or delivery as well as through breast feeding. According to UNAIDS/WHO ([WHO07]), an estimated 33.2 million people in the world are living with HIV/AIDS as at 2007 ([WHO07]). Young people under 25 years old account for half of all new HIV infections worldwide. Nigeria recorded her first case of AIDS in 1986. Since then, the epidemic has ballooned through prevalence sentinel survey of 1.8% in 1991 to 5.8% in 2001, 5 % in 2003 and 4.4% of the entire population by 2005. According to National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) ([NAC05]) with a total population of over 120 million people, Nigeria is estimated to have the highest number of persons living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa with the exception of South Africa and Zambia. UNAIDS ([UNA08]) estimated that Nigeria in the 2006 survey, National prevalence rate had dropped from 5.8% in 2001, 5% in 2003, 4.4% in 2005 to 3.9% in 2006. However, it found that state prevalence band running from the North central through South East to the South -South states, South west and part of the North- West state. State specific prevalence rates, vary from as low as 1.2% in Osun State, 1.6 % in Ekiti, 10% in Benue State to as high as 12% in Cross River State ([UNA08]).

Students in secondary schools are mostly in their adolescent stage. The World Health Organization ([WHO88]) describes adolescent as people between the ages of 10-19 years. Belkin ([Bel88]) described the adolescent as an individual in search of self and who does not understand much about himself or herself. Prominent among things which he does not understand about himself/herself is the entire area of sexual attraction to the opposite gender experienced in early adolescence stage (13-15 years) and the relationship with the opposite sex assuming an important role during the late adolescence (16-19 years). Science Teachers Association of Nigeria ([STA06]) explaining the adolescent increase in sexual interest said it might be due to the increase in the quantity of sex hormones- progesterone in male that stimulate the person's sexual drive. This according to Sarojini ([Sar00]) may eventually increase adolescent desire for sexual pleasure.

Adolescents constitute an important sector of the world's total population. Over four billion people in the world are between the ages of 10-19 years ([WHO06]). In Africa, south of the Sahara, Nigeria is the most populous country and is among the 10 most populous countries of the world. The estimated population of Nigeria in 2006 was 140 million (National Population Commission, [NPC06]). According to Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey ([MOH06]), of the density, adolescent between ages 10-19 years were estimated to number

5.7 million. Potential threats to this group of people therefore can be seen as that of the whole nation and nothing constitutes a greater threat to adolescents than AIDS which HIV causes. Sexual behaviour does not connote coital experience or sexual intercourse alone but it embraces all sexual activities that can lead to actual sexual intercourse. These include holding of hands, embracing, dating, light and deep kissing, breast/genital fondling, petting, oral/genital contact. The involvement of adolescent in sexual behaviour is not without its consequences. Some of the consequences of increased adolescent sexuality world wide include an increased rate of adolescent pregnancies and abortions, a high prevalence of sexually transmitted disease and a significant number of psycho- social problems. The pervasiveness of this adolescent problem has both biological and social causes. The early onset of menarche among females is the most significant biological reason. Socio economic reasons include rapid urbanization and modernization and increased rural urban migration in search of jobs, institution of higher learning or opportunities for apprenticeship which enable young people to break away from constrains traditionally applied by their families and village communities.

Therefore, the problem of HIV/AIDS maybe earlier address from the root through Biology as a science subjects at the Senior Secondary level in Nigeria educational system. Its importance as a discipline cannot be over emphasized especially in the area of science due to it combination of theoretical and practical in teaching method as was mentioned by Okoro, ([Oko98]) Ndu et al., ([NAA99]) Sarojini ([Sar00]). This will quickly subdue the rate of its spreading among the youth and society at large.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is carried out to investigate the views of senior school students on HIV/AIDS in Offa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. With the target population of senior students who offered biology in their 3rd year. A multistage sampling technique was utilized. Out of 75 private and 52 public schools across the study area, 10 schools were randomly selected. From each of the selected school, 30 senior school biology students with the age bracket of 14 to 18 years were purposively selected, totaled of 300 students. Closed and opened ended questionnaires made up of 45 questions were administered to the selected students. Based on the nature of the collected data, both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used. Descriptive statistical tools such as frequency count, percentage and tables were used to analyze the data and present the result while inferential statistics like Analysis of Variance ([O+18, L+18]) and t-test. ANOVA was used to compare the view of student on HIV/AID based on their subject combination (arts, science and commercial) while t-test was used to address the view of student on HIV/AID from genders and school types (private and public) perspective.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research studied the views of senior school students on HIV/AIDS. It also sought to find out the influence of certain factors or variables such as: sex, type of school and students' subject area of specialization on students' views of HIV/AIDS. This chapter is a presentation of the results obtained from the analysis of data collected and in the interpretation of the findings. Table 1 presents the results on general views of the respondents on HIV/AIDS in Offa LGA of Kwara state.

In table 1, the general views of respondents on HIV/AIDS were presented. Item with the highest number of respondents expressing agreement were items 5,10,9 and 7. In other words the highest number were the respondents who agreed that "they got to know about AIDS from the mass media such as news papers, radio, television, magazine and so on, with 264 (88.0%). This single response showed that about 88%of the students in Offa, Kwara state had heard about HIV/AIDS and also knew that one gets HIV before getting AIDS. This was a clear support for the findings of Olayinka and Osho's ([OO97]) who stated that adolescents' knowledge about AIDS and its causative agent (HIV) is high. This result also agreed with the works of other researchers like Singer, Rogers and Corcoran, ([SRC87]), Fakeye and Fakeye, ([FF89]), Alao and Olaseha, ([AO93]); Umoh and Okesina, ([UO99]) and Umoh, Okesina, Adeoye and Obiyemi, ([U+01]) who all reported that there was a high level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS among secondary school students. The result however differed from that of UNAIDS ([UNA02]) who reported that at least 30% of young people in 22 surveyed countries had never heard of AIDS and how it is transmitted. This deference however can be attributed to the renewed effort by the federal government of Nigeria at enlightening the masses of the dangers of HIV/AIDS. There have been strong efforts through the use of mass media, and printed materials in enlightening the students in the states' secondary school about HIV/AIDS. Therefore, there is a positive view of HIV/AIDS among secondary school students in Offa L.G.A. of Kwara State.

The next highest agreements were those who believed that "people with AIDS may suffer body

weight loss" and they were 254 (84.7%). Next 252 (84.0%) agreed that "AIDS is a disease that affects both infants and adult". Lastly, 248 (82.7%) agreed that "AIDS occur when the immune system was severely damaged by HIV". The above were ranked as first, second, third and fourth respectively. The lowest level of agreement was expressed in items 2,3,1,8. This means only 122 (40.7) agreed that "they learnt about HIV/AIDS from their friends and their biology teacher". This was followed by the 142 (47.3%) respondents who agreed that they learnt about HIV/AIDS from their parents" lastly 14 (48.7%) agreed that "people with HIV infection are initially without symptoms" These were further ranked as sixteenth, fifteenth and fourteenth respectively.

Table 1: General Views on HIV/AIDS in Offa L.G.A. of Kwara State

General views on HIV/AIDS Mode of Awareness	Item	Agreed Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D	Rankin
My parents	1	142	47.3	1.39	0.642	15th
My friend	2	122	40.7	1.34	0.599	16th
My biology teacher	3	122	40.7	1.34	0.509	16th
Biology Textbook	4	166	55.3	1.48	0.631	13th
Mass media	5	264	88.0	183	0.483	1st
Qualified medical personnel	6	188	62.7	1.59	0.556	10th
AIDS occur when the immune systems are severely damaged by HIV	7	248	82.7	1.76	0.563	4th
People with HIV infection are initially without symptoms.	8	146	48.7	1.37	0.688	14th
AIDS is a disease that affect both infants and adults	9	252	84.0	1.78	0.541	3rd
Body weight loss is caused by AIDS.	10	254	84.7	1.80	0.504	2nd
Some infected people will develop HIV disease only after a few month	11	172	57.3	1.39	0.783	12th
Effect of AIDS on homosexual and Heterosexual population	12	210	70.0	1.57	0.717	7th
AIDS is now prevalent in Nigeria	13	226	75.3	1.59	0.750	5th
Men and women AIDS proportion	14	182	60.7	1.41	0.795	11th
Educational, political and economic development effect of AIDS	15	222	74.0	1.65	645	6th
Swollen lymph nodes and skin symptoms of AIDS	16	202	67.3	1.51	765	8th
AIDS has no cure	17	196	65.3	1.48	773	9th

In table 2 above the general views of respondents on mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS was presented. Items with the highest number of respondents expressing agreement were 22, 24 and 21. This means that the highest numbers were the respondents who agreed that "anybody who shares blade, needle or any sharp objects with another person has higher risk of contracting HIV with 268 (89.3%). The next highest agreements were those who believed that sleeping around, having casual sex is the easiest way of getting infected with AIDS. And they were 264 (88.00%). Lastly, 258 (86.0%) agreed that AIDS can be transmitted from person to person through sexual intercourse. The lowest level of agreement was expressed in item 20 and 19. This means only 210 (70%) agreed that prostitutes are responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

This positive view on HIV/AIDS (which in most cases is mental assessment only) does not however translate into clear cut awareness and understanding of the intricacies and complication of HIV/AIDS. This is evidenced by the high HIV/AIDS views reported in which (84.7%) of the respondents agreed that "people with AIDS may suffer body weight loss". This means that many students still picture HIV victims as emaciated and sickly people as often portrayed in the media. The preceding shows that although many students have heard about HIV/AIDS they still harbor serious misconceptions about it. This finding is also supported by UNAIDS ([UNA02]) in its report, where a fifth of the Botswana secondary school pupils believed they could screen out risky partners by looks alone. Adegoke and Araoye ([AA96]) in their study of AIDS related knowledge, attitude and behavior among selected adolescents in Nigeria expressed that knowledge of HIV/AIDS and its mode of transmission are high among secondary school adolescents in Nigeria, yet misconceptions are still very common. Many students only believe that a

person with HIV/AIDS must always look skinny, emaciated and very diseased. They do not however believe a person infected with HIV can look and also felt healthy. This indeed was a serious misconception among many adolescent and students in secondary schools.

Table 2: Student t-test on Gender Analysis on HIV/AIDS

Gender	N	Means	Std dev.	D.f.	t-value	Critical t value.
Male	142	1.7003	.16074			
				298	1.85	1.96
Female	158	1.6530	.26362			

* p<0.05

This was followed by the 224 (74.7%) who agreed that sex before marriage can lead to AIDS, these were further ranked as seventh and sixth. Student t-test is used in order to test the hypothesis that there is no significant different on the views of HIV/AIDS among students offering biology in Senior Secondary School in Offa, Kwara State on the basis of gender (Table 2). It shows that there is no significant difference on the views of HIV/AIDS among students of senior school students who were offering biology on the basis of their gender. This decision was made because the calculated t-value (1.85) was lesser than the critical t-value (1.96) at 0.05 significant levels. Hence, the null hypothesis of no difference was accepted. It can also be observed that both male and female students had equal mean score of 1.7.

Table 3: General Views on HIV/AIDS mode of Transmission in Ranking Order

Mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS	Item No VHAQ	F n=300	%	Mean	S.D	Ranking
Aids is caused by Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV)	18	254	84.7	1.75	.625	4th
Sex before marriage can lead to AIDS	19	224	74.7	1..70	.552	6th
Prostitutes are responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS	20	210	70.01	1.58	.697	7th
AIDS can be transmitted from person to person through sexual intercourse	21	258	86.0	1.79	.546	3rd
Anybody who share blade, needle or any sharp object with another person has higher risk of contracting HIV	22	268	98.3	1.85	.454	1st
HIV can be transmitted from an infected mother to her child through breast milk	23	234	78.0	1.68	.647	5th
Sleeping around, having casual sex is the easiest way of getting infected with AIDS	24	264	88.0	1.81	.535	2nd

Source: Author's Fieldwork and Data Analysis (2018)

4. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the data collected revealed the HIV/ADS order of awareness to be mass media, parent and friends, respectively. Sharing of blade, needle or any sharp object with another person had higher risk of contracting HIV account for 89.3% of the respondents, followed by casual sex intercourse with an infected person and prostitutes. Significant differences were observed in students' views on HIV/AIDS on the basis of the type of schools the students attended while none was observed on the basis of their sex and their subjects' area of specialization.

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Ethical Approval: All procedures performed in the study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee.

Informed consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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