



KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS OF HIV/AIDS AMONG SOME SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN KATSINA, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

A cross sectional study to determine the knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS among some senior secondary school students was undertaken in Katsina, Katsina State, Nigeria. The purpose of this study was to provide preliminary data on HIV/AIDS knowledge and awareness among young people in Katsina. A 26 item, English-language questionnaire was pilot-tested and administered to a sample of 120 students across 6 selected secondary schools, namely: Women Teachers College (WTC), Day Sahara D/S), Government Secondary School kofar Yandaka (K/Y), Government College Katsina (GCK), Kiddies International School (KIDS), and Ulal Albab Science Secondary School (ULAL). The questionnaires were coded and analyzed using the SPSS software. The data was then subjected to simple descriptive statistical analysis. There were fairly distributions in the number of male and female respondents, 86% aged 16-20years. Also 96% known what HIV/AIDS is but only 52.5% believed that HIV/AIDS has cure. There was also high awareness of the fact that the disease can kill (96%). Television (71%), poster (66.6%), radio (66%), and public lectures (60%) were the major source of information on HIV/AIDS. There was a very good positive attitude on the studies secondary school students towards those infected with HIV/AIDS as only 15% and 18% says that they would drive them away and boycott them respectively.

Key words: Knowledge, Awareness, HIV/AIDS, Secondary School Students.

INTRODUCTION

In 1983, scientists isolated what appeared to be a new human retrovirus (or what came to be known as the Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV) from the lymph node of a man at risk of developing the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Encarta, 2005). Presently about 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS around the world with 4 million of them in Nigeria (Sa'ad, 2008). The first reported case of AIDS in Nigeria was in 1986. Since then, the prevalence of the infection has continued to grow from 1.8% in 1991 to 4.5% in 1996, 5.8% in 2001, 5.0% in 2005 and 4.4% in 2006 (Sa'ad, 2008). It was observed that in the forthcoming report on the national Sentinel Survey conducted by NSCAP, the prevalence rate for the 2008 is now 3.8% (Sa'ad, 2008).

The United Nation Fund for Population Activities Report stressed the fact that discussing sex is taboo in many countries, thus denying a large number of people especially the 15-24 age group the necessary information to negotiate safe sex (International Barrier Protection Digest, 2004).

Secondary school students are in the adolescent age which is the time they begin to be interested in sexual relationships. The youths are at a stage when they may want to experiment with sex without giving much consideration to the implication of their present behaviour (Bankole and Mabekoje, 2008). What is more disturbing is that the most infected and affected victims of HIV/AIDS are the youths. For instance, in 1998 about 60% of all reported cases of HIV/AIDS came from the age group 15-25 years who constitute more than 50% of Nigeria

population (Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council, 2003).

School children of today are exposed to the risk of being victims of HIV/AIDS – which was quite unknown to their predecessors of few decades ago. The epidemic of HIV/AIDS is now progressing at a rapid rate among young people. Programme managers and policy makers have often recommended that schools can act as the centre point for disseminating information and education on HIV/AIDS. Hence, school education has been described as a 'social vaccine', and it can serve as a powerful preventive tool.

A number of studies were conducted in various parts of Nigeria on Knowledge, attitude, behaviour and awareness of HIV/AIDS, such as in Ogun state (Bankole and Mabekoje, 2008), in Keffi (Marcus and Mashi, 2006), in Benin City (Wagbatsoma and Okojie, 2006), and in Borno (Sa'ad and Bello, 2006) among others.

As children are valuable resources for the future of a country, it is imperative that they be equipped with ample amount of information so as to protect themselves and their counterparts from falling a prey this still-an-incurable killer disease. Hence, this study in Katsina was conducted with the following objectives;

- (a) To assess the extent to which the secondary school students are aware of existence of HIV/AIDS.
- (b) To identify their source of this awareness; and
- (c) To find out if they are aware of both preventive and curative measures of HIV/AIDS

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Survey population

A total of 120 secondary school students across 6 selected secondary schools in Katsina town were surveyed. In every school, 20 students were selected. This population was considered to be typical of secondary school seniors across the town. The schools selected are Women Teachers Collage (WTC), Day Sahara (D/S), Government Secondary School kofar Yandaka (K/Y), Government Collage Katsina (GCK), Kiddies International School (KIDS), and Ulal Albal Science Secondary School (ULAL).

The Survey Instrument

A 26-item English-language questionnaire was used in the study. There were structured and open-ended questions aimed at measuring respondent's knowledge and awareness regarding HIV/AIDS in the area. The questionnaire focused on knowledge level about HIV/AIDS among the students.

Questionnaires were administered and retrieved directly by the researcher during class-lecture period. Participants were given one hour to complete the questionnaire. Upon completion, each participant submitted his or her instrument to the researcher who placed it in a large envelope. At the end of the class period, all envelopes were collected, sealed and returned to the researcher. Of the 120 questionnaires administered to the target population, all were retrieved and analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data was first coded and then entered and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The data was then subjected to simple descriptive statistical analysis and percentage (%).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic profile of the respondents

Table 1 presents data on the social-economic profile of the respondents. It is clear from the study that male gender is greater than female in the study population. This is because of historical background on education status in the northern state. On age characteristic of the respondents only 5% of the respondents are above 21years. This clearly shows that majority of the respondents are adolescents. A close look at the table reveals that all the respondents are unmarried and this is not surprising since in most parts of the country, young children marry at least after finishing their secondary school education.

On the religious affiliation of the respondents, it indicates that the respondents belong to the two main religious groups, Islam and Christianity, in the country, with high proportion of Islam religion (84%). Since religion has a role to play in moral upbringing, it is expected that the respondents should have some high level of moral orientation towards sexual behaviour which could influence their vulnerability to contacting HIV/AIDS. The ethnic groups that

dominate Katsina state constitute a distinct grouping that can be recognised in this study while the other minority ethnic groups in the country can constitute another distinct grouping in this study. Majority of the respondents (81.7%) are Hausa, which is the main ethnic group in the state.

Data on class in school to which the respondents belong shows that the proportion of SS2 student's is high (56%) compare to the other classes. This was deliberately done in order to ensure fair representation of the adolescent's age students. Data on the place where the respondents are residing in the study area shows that about 74% of the respondents are day students. This indicate that day schooling system is the most commonest system in Katsina as it is increasingly becoming difficult for the state government to accommodate and feed most of the secondary school students on schools campuses.

On the major occupations that parents of the various respondents take part in. It could be seen from the table that civil service constitutes the dominant occupation type (57%), followed by trading/business and farming (about 28%). Also it is clear from the table that most (50.8%) of the parents has one wife each while only 11.7% of them have four wives each. This is not surprising since majority of parents of the respondents are civil servants whose relay on their monthly salary to feed their families.

Data on number of children per wife of the parents of the respondents from the table show that majority of the respondents (40%) do have between 4 to 6 children each while 7.5% have 1 to 3 children each. This indicates high level of children bearing on the side of the wives and this is expected since high fertility level is a common characteristic of most Africa women. Responses received on the person on whose should lies the responsibility of taking care of the schooling of the respondents, from the table indicate that, fathers (81.7%) remain the main ones taking care of such responsibilities of most of the respondents and this is expected since it is mainly the responsibility of a father to do that.

Knowledge of HIV/AIDS issues

Table 2 presents summary of the responses received on the respondents' knowledge of the existence and cure for HIV/AIDS, whether it can jeopardise of someone's dream, whether it kills and if any infected person has ever died of it. From the table, it is clear that, 97.5% of the respondents are aware of HIV/AIDS exist, 52.5 % of them believe that there is cure for the disease and also 58% of them believe that the disease can jeopardise the dream of a person if he contacts it. Also it shows that majority (96%) of the respondents area aware of the fact that the disease kills but only 66% of them claimed knowing of any infected person that has died of the disease. 65% of the respondents are willing to be tested for the disease.

Table 1 Socio-economic profile of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	72	60
Female	48	40
Age group (years)		
10 to 15	11	9
16 to 20	103	86
21 to 25	4	3
>25	2	2
Marital Status		
Single	115	92
Married	5	4
Religion		
Islam	101	84
Christianity	19	16
Ethnic group		
Hausa	98	81.7
Yoruba	3	2.5
Igba	5	4.2
Fulani	6	5
Idoma	3	2.5
Ijaw	1	0.8
Bashama	1	0.8
Igala	2	1.7
Urhobo	1	0.8
Class in school		
SS1	13	11
SS2	67	56
SS3	40	33
Residence		
Hostel	31	26
Outside	89	74
Parents occupation		
Civil service	68	57
Armed forces	3	2.5
Trading/Business	34	28
Farming	8	7
Services	3	2.5
No response	4	3
Parents no. of wives		
1	61	50.8
2	32	26.7
3	13	10.8
4	14	11.7
Mothers no. of children		
1 to 3	9	7.5
4 to 6	48	40
7 to 9	42	35
>9	20	16.7
No response	1	0.8
Responsibility for Schooling		
Father	98	81.7
Mother	6	5
Brother	2	1.7
Uncle	1	0.8
No response	13	10.8

Source: Field Work (2009)

Table 3 is the responses received on knowledge of some issues related to the transmission of HIV/AIDS disease. A close look at the table reveals that sexual intercourse (96.7%) , use of needles and syringes on human body (82.5%), blood transfusion (86.7%) are the major means by which the disease is transmitted.

On the other hand, the respondents gave low scores to factors such as sharing toilets, kissing/hugging and mosquito bites (generally less than 20% of responses) as important causative factors of transmission of the disease.

Table 2: Knowledge of existence and cure for HIV/AIDS, its jeopardising of some one's dream, whether it kills, if any infected person has ever died of it and if they are willing to be tested.

Knowledge	Yes Response		No Response	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Do you know what HIV/AIDS is	115	96	5	4
Invalid	-	-	-	-
Existence of HIV/AIDS	117	97.5	3	2.5
Invalid	-	-	-	-
Existence of cure for HIV/AIDS	63	52.5	57	47.5
Invalid	-	-	-	-
HIV/AIDS infection jeopardise someone's dreams	70	58	38	32
Invalid	12	10	-	-
HIV/AIDS kills	115	96	4	3
Invalid	1	1	-	-
Existence of someone infected and Died of HIV/AIDS	79	66	40	33
Invalid	1	1	1	-
I am willing to be tested for HIV/AIDS	78	65	41	34
Invalid	1	1	-	-

Source: Field Work (2009)

Table 3: Knowledge of means of transmitting HIV/AIDS

Methods of Transmission	Yes Response		No Response	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sex	116	96.7	3	2.5
Invalid	1	0.8	-	-
Sharing toilet	23	19	89	74
Invalid	8	7	-	-
Needles and syringes	99	82.5	65	-
Invalid	15	12.5	-	-
Mosquito bites	21	17.5	85	70.8
Invalid	14	11.7	-	-
Infected blood	104	86.7	75.8	-
Invalid	9	7.5	-	-
Kissing/hugging	10	8	93	78
Invalid	17	14	-	-

Source: Field work

Table 4 is the summary of the responses received on the means by which the respondents derive knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the sources they would prefer as the main ones through which to be acquiring such knowledge. It could be seen from the table that television, posters, radio and public lectures at the school are the main sources of awareness about HIV/AIDS issues (with 71%, 66.6%, 60% and 60% responses respectively). On the other hand, the main source the respondents would prefer as the main source of their awareness about on the disease is roadside show (37%).

Table 5 present summary of some awareness campaigns about HIV/AIDS issues in their schools. It could be seen from the table that while 52% of them said they have ever witnessed such campaigns, 47% of them said they have not done so. Also while 50% of them said that they have men and women on a stage truck with loud speaker raising awareness on the disease, 37% of them said they have not done so. Likewise, while 48% of the respondents have admitted ever witnessing men and

women using head phones and flipcharts talking about the disease, 36% of them said they have not done so. Similarly, 33% of them said they have never seen a film, drama or comedy performed for them in the school but 49% of them said they have done so. These thus indicate that there are generally partial levels of school-based campaigns on the disease in the area. Table 6 presents data on the responses received on some issues that border on the attitudes of the respondents towards people that have contacted with HIV/AIDS. From the table, 93% of the respondents said they will show love and care to them, but 90% of them said they will help them with prayers. However, 58% of the respondents said they would not boycott such people and 76% of them said they will even give them some support in order to help them. Also, 73% of them said they will not afford to drive such people away, and 79% of them said they will continue to treat them like other normal human beings. These indicate therefore that the respondents have a generally positive attitude towards people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Table 4: Source of knowledge about HIV/AIDS issues

Source of Knowledge	Source Available		Source Preferred	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Public lectures	72	60	40	33
No Response	8	7	-	-
Posters	80	66.6	32	26.7
No Response	8	6.7	-	-
Hand bills	49	41	39	32
No Response	32	27	-	-
Television	85	71	23	19
No Response	12	10	-	-
Radio	79	66	28	23
No Response	13	11	-	-
Roadside show	52	43	44	37
No Response	24	20	-	-
Others	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Work (2009)

Table 5: Existence of HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in school

Respondent's Personal Attitude	Yes Response		No Response		Invalid	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Have ever Witnessed the campaign	63	52	56	47	1	1
Involves Men and Women on Stage track With loud Speakers	60	50	44	37	16	13
Involves Men and Women using Headphones And Flipcharts	58	48	43	36	19	16
Involves Shows with local Artists and Comedians	59	49	40	33	21	18
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Field Work (2009)

Table 6: Attitude towards someone infected with HIV/AIDS

Respondent's Personal Attitude	Yes Response		No Response		Invalid	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Love and care	111	93	5	4	4	3
Prayers	108	90	5	4	7	6
Boycott	22	18	69	58	29	24
Support	91	76	17	14	12	10
Treating like normal	95	79	16	13	9	8
Drive Away	18	15	88	73	14	12

Source: Field Work (2009)

Table 7 presents data on the responses received on some issues that border on how one can avoid contacting with HIV/AIDS. From the table, 89.2% of the respondents said sex absenteeism while only 12.5% said avoids use of condom. However, 90.8%

of the respondents said avoid blood transfusion that affected with HIV/AIDS while also 94.2% said avoid reused of needles and syringes. These indicate therefore that the respondents have a general knowledge on how to avoid contacting with HIV/AIDS.

Table 7: Knowledge on how one can avoid contacting HIV/AIDS

Respondent's Personal Attitude	Yes Response		No Response		Invalid	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sex	107	89.2	10	8.3	3	2.5
Absenteeism						
Avoid blood Transfusion	109	90.8	8	6.7	3	2.5
Use of Condom	102	85	15	12.5	3	2.5
Avoid reused of Needles & syringes	113	94.2	4	3.3	3	2.5

Source: Field Work (2009)

Conclusion and Recommendations

It was observed that through the general level of knowledge and awareness of adolescent secondary school students in Katsina on HIV/AIDS that majority of the respondents had heard of the disease. It is also becoming clear that the student's reliable means of obtaining correct information on the subject of HIV/AIDS are through television, posters and radio, but they preferred roadside show or public lectures as the source of knowledge on HIV/AIDS. Most of the respondents believe that HIV/AIDS has cure, it kills and are willing to be tested for HIV/AIDS. The main causes of transmitting HIV/AIDS base on the respondents are sexual intercourse, use of needles and syringes on human body, and transfusion of infected blood. Also most of the respondents are

willing to show love, care, support and are not boycott such people that are affected with HIV/AIDS.

It is recommend that the school authorities and the other agencies concerned should come forward to design awareness campaigns for the benefit of the students in the study area and Nigeria at large so as to help them develop proper understanding of what HIV/AIDS is, how it is spread, and how it is prevented. It is also recommended that school libraries should be involved in activities that will promote easy access and retrieval of HIV/AIDS information materials, and also involvement of secondary school teachers in educating students on HIV/AIDS and also inclusion of a specific chapter on HIV/AIDS in the school curricula which could help in preventing and curbing the spread of the epidemic to a great extent.

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