

ATTITUDE OF NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS HIV/AIDS CAMPAIGNS

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Abstract

The study ascertained the attitude of Niger Delta University undergraduates' towards HIV/AIDS campaigns. A total number of 950 undergraduates participated in the study. They comprised 400 male and 550 female undergraduates. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Data was analyzed using Independent t – test and one way analysis of variance. The results revealed that undergraduates had a positive attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaigns with the attitude of female students being significantly more positive than the attitude of male students. Result also revealed that there is no significant difference between undergraduates' religious beliefs and attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign. It is recommended among others that there is a need to organize gender specific campaigns, programmes and services.

Key Words: HIV/AIDS Campaigns, Attitude, Religious Beliefs, Undergraduates and Prevalence Rate, Male and Female.

Introduction

Since the fall of man, there has been series of epidemics and diseases that has threatened and plagued the existence of the human race, but none has been as devastating as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The scourge of this virus has left individuals, families, communities, states, nations and the world at large at a loss about what to do to stop or halt the spread of the disease from one person to another.

Statistic shows that a large number of cases, prevalence and death rate occur in Africa more than other regions of world as indicated in Table 1.

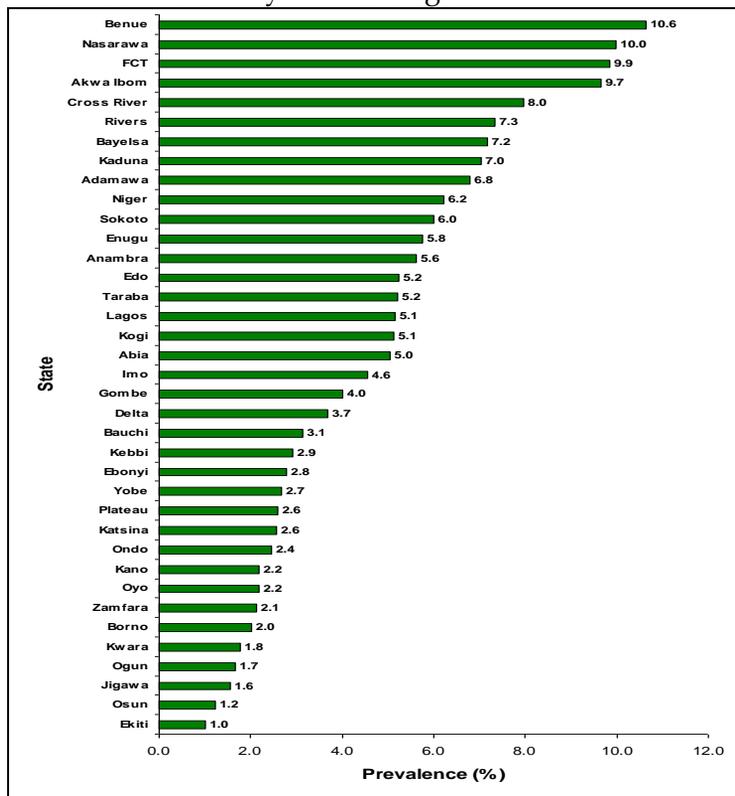
Table 1. World -wide Statistic on HIV/ AIDS Prevalence Rate

Region	Number of Cases	New Infection	Deaths
North America	920,000	45,000	20,000
Caribbean	390,000	60,000	32,000
Latin America	1.4million	150,000	50,000
Western European	540,000	30,000	7,000
Sub Saharan Africa	25.2million	3.8million	2.4million

Source: D’Aulnais 2007

Africa is the focus of the world’s HIV/ AIDS campaigns because it is where the pandemic is having more impact. Nigeria is not exempted from the countries affected by the pandemic in Sub Sahara Africa as every state in Nigeria is affected as indicated in Table 2

Table 2. HIV Prevalence by State in Nigeria

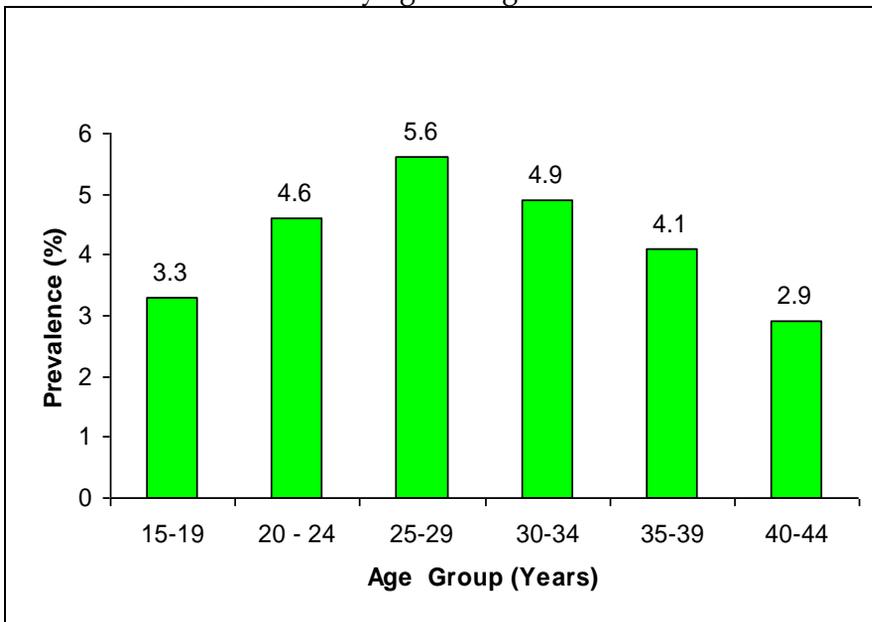


Source: NHSS 2008-Sentinel Survey 2008

The HIV prevalence rate in Bayelsa state in the 2005 sentinel survey was 3.8 percent which translates to an estimated 40,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in 2005. Bayelsa State has witnessed an astronomical increase within the past four years to 7.2 percent which is very alarming and the figure is projected to increase if drastic measures are not taken in terms of intervention. The exact number of women who are infected and children who are orphaned has not been determined in Bayelsa State, but the result of prevalence obtained from the National Sentinel Surveillance conducted by the Federal Ministry of Health, in 2008 indicated that all where female an indication that there is a considerable number of women living with HIV and OVC in the state.

The NHSS 2008 Sentinel Survey on HIV prevalence by age indicated that young adults between the ages of 25- 29 are mostly affected as shown in Table 3

Table 3 HIV Prevalence by age in Nigeria



Source: NHSS 2008 Sentinel Survey

Table 3 shows that young people especially those at the late adolescent and early adulthood are mostly affected by the disease and since a majority of these individuals are sexually active. The major medium through which the infection is spread is by heterosexual intercourse; more young people between the ages of 15-39 are going to be

affected by the disease. This is because they constitute the most sexually active and economically productive segment of the society. Anyiam-Osigwe & Okudo, 2006 revealed that youths are more susceptible to AIDS and that every 15 seconds; one young person is infected with HIV. 60 per cent of all newly infected HIV/AIDS victim on annual basis are under 30 years of age.

In spite of the prevalence rate, progress has been made in the fight against AIDS but not enough. Nearly, 1 million persons between began life long drug treatment in developing countries in 2004 even though there were 2.5 million new infection (Drugger, 2005). In the same vein Anti- Retroviral Therapy in Federal Government of Nigeria designated centres since December 25, 2005. 2006 has witnessed a massive up scaling of Anti- Retroviral Therapy in Nigeria. The Obasanjo led Federal Government is committed to AIDS control (Anyiam- Osigwe & Okudo, 2006). In Bayelsa state, a state Action Committee on AIDS (SACA) was established in 2000 by Governor Alamesigha and was also reconstituted by Governor Good luck Jonathan in 2006 with a special adviser. The Bayelsa HIV prevalence is put at 7.2% percent, by 2008 sero-prevalence survey, and seemingly double increase from 3.8% in 2005. This development messages with notable contributions as a result of prevention strategies being adopted in the state. There is an appreciable increase in HIV/AIDS prevention messages with notable contributions from the three arms of the government of Bayelsa state which was made evident during the three arm walk. Available IEC materials in the state are mainly produced by the state SACA, few NGOs and development partners working in the state but the number is quiet limited to go round the target audience.

The state acquired its own branded Anti Retro-Viral (ARV) drugs to increase the reach of its provision for free treatment for HIV/AIDS. Also the state gives a monthly allowance of N10, 000 to all People Living with HIV/AIDS. Community home- based care in the state is mainly carried out by NGOs, FBOs and People Living with HIV/AIDS support groups. Some other organizations have contributed immensely to the fight against HIV/AIDS in the state they include: World Bank, Shell Petroleum Development Company and President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. There have being various forms of campaigns on HIV/AIDS in the print/audio media and also visual media. Also in the schools peer educators are trained on HIV/AIDS. In spite of the wealth of information and campaigns carried out, university undergraduates still engage themselves in risky behaviour that may lead to HIV infection. Thus, as

the premiere university of the state, it has become imperative to assess the attitude of Niger Delta University undergraduates towards HIV/AIDS campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS campaigns since Bayelsa state is one of the foremost Nigerian state in the campaign against the spread of this pandemic.

To guide this study therefore two **hypotheses** were raised:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign.
2. There is no significant difference between undergraduates' religious beliefs and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign.

Literature Review

Relevant literature was reviewed using the following sub headings:

Students' sex on attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign

Students' religious beliefs and attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign

Students' sex on attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign

An individual's attitude has a significant role in the behaviour manifested or displayed by individual towards issues, be it education, politics, sex, etc. Sacco, Rickman, Levine and Reed (1993) revealed that females generally had more favourable attitude than male about condom but were more inhibited than men buying and possessing them. Men carried and kept condom at home more often than women did. It was discovered that condom use and attitude were the same. In the same vein, Jadack, Hyde and Keller (1995) posited that both men and women reported comfort using condoms.

Furthermore, Sacco, Rickman, Levin and Reed (1993), Akande (1994), Jadack, Hyde and Keller (1995) and Dekin (1996) revealed that more men engaged in sexual intercourse without condom because of the use of alcohol and lack of self control while more women participated in sex without condom in long term relationships and because they use pill. However, Asuquo, Ottoho, Etudor and Asuquo (2003) indicated that males had a more positive attitude than females. This was contradicted by the Study of Joshua and Joshua (2006) that posited that no significant difference existed among males and females in their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign.

Students' religious beliefs and attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign

Africans seem to be injected with an overdose of religious faiths beliefs and cultures which inexorably influenced their attitude, lifestyle, behaviour and also attitude toward HIV/AIDS campaign.

Okeke and Fortune (1992) in a survey conducted in the Nigerian universities revealed that 71 per cent of the respondents believed that religious practices should be considered when developing an AIDS education curriculum. In the same vein, Odebisi (1992) revealed that 3.3 per cent 20.0 per cent of medical students hold AIDS as God's punishment for man's sexual excesses. Also Nicholas and Durrheim (1995) in a study of first year Black South African university students discovered that negative attitude towards homosexuality were significantly associated with negative attitude toward AIDS, high knowledge of AIDS and high religiosity. Religious commitment diminished the propensity to engage in sexual intercourse and delayed the age for onset of sexual intercourse.

However, Joshua and Joshua (2006) in their study revealed that there is no significant difference in attitude toward campaigns between those with religious belief and non religious on the concept of HIV/AIDS issues.

Methods**Research design:**

This is a survey study exploring the descriptive survey design.

Participants

The population of the study consisted of the eleven faculties in Niger Delta University with six thousand seven hundred and thirty- six (6,736) undergraduates. Participants were 950 respondents randomly selected from the eleven faculties consisting 400 males and 550 females.

Measures

Data collection was done through the aid of a questionnaire which contained two sections. Section A contained personal data and section B contained 10 items that reflected the attitude of students towards HIV/AIDS campaigns, with a reliability coefficient of 0.78

Procedure

1000 copies of the questionnaire were administered to randomly selected undergraduates in the eleven faculties and 950 copies were retrieved. Statistics: independent t-test and one way analysis of variance was used to analyse data.

Results

The two hypotheses formulated for the study were tested at .05 level of significance. The results are presented below.

Hypothesis 1 states that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduates and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign.

Table 4. Independence t-test comparison of male and female undergraduates' attitude toward HIV/AIDS campaigns.

Sex	N	X	SD	t-value	df
Males	400	71.75	8.36	5.06	9.45
Females	550	63.00	7.85		

Significant at .05, t- critical 1.98 , N=95; df=93

Result in Table 4 reveals an independent t- test analysis of the comparison of male and female undergraduates in their attitude toward HIV/AIDS campaign. Analysis of data shows that the respondents are significantly different in their attitude toward HIV/AIDS campaign. The calculated t- value of 5.06 is higher than the critical t- value of 1.98 with df of 948 and alpha level of .05, the hypothesis is therefore rejected. Hypothesis 2 states that there is no significant difference between undergraduates' religious beliefs and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign.

Result in Table 5 reveals the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of undergraduates' religious beliefs and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaign. With this result, the hypothesis is retained.

Table 5 One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of undergraduates' religious beliefs and their attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaigns.

Religious belief	N	X	SD
Christian	90	69.67	8.3
Muslim	5	67.4	7.34
Others	0		

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	df	Means of squares
F-ratio			
Between group	29.34	K-1=2	14.64
0.000			
Within group	38966945.2	N-K=947	41147.78
Total	39426469.45	949	

Not significant at .05, df = 2 and 947 critical F= 3.00

Discussion

The findings of this study showed that female undergraduates have a significantly more positive attitude toward HIV/AIDS campaigns. This is not surprising because female undergraduates perceive themselves to be more vulnerable as portrayed by the different campaigns. Another factor responsible for this is also that female undergraduates' participate more on the peer educator programmes than their male counterparts, they also attend workshops and seminars on campus more than their male counterparts.

The study also revealed that religious beliefs does not significantly influence undergraduates' attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaigns. This is so because undergraduates have great awareness and knowledge of how HIV/AIDS can be contracted. Another factor is that majority of the respondents were Christians and they believed strongly that they should abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage and that they should not engage in unprotected sex as taught in the churches and mosques. Also religious leaders were also being used to campaign for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Counselling implication

This research has shown that Niger Delta University undergraduates have a positive attitude toward HIV/AIDS campaign, however, with the attitude of female undergraduates more positive than their male counterparts. Consequently this trend need to be reversed by providing

services that could be gender specific. More so, this positive attitude could be sustained and increased by organising interactive counselling sessions to allow students air their views publicly on HIV/AIDS related issues and further campaigns to be conducted.

Finally, counsellors should develop new strategies on campus to interact with undergraduates routinely and develop guidance and counselling programmes that will aid in exposing cultural and religious beliefs that may negatively influence undergraduates' attitude towards HIV/AIDS campaigns.

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