

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF PARENTS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS TOWARDS THE INTEGRATION OF HIV POSITIVE ADOLESCENTS IN REGULAR CLASSES IN OKE-OGUN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

HIV/AIDS is a global problem. The devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on the world's population, particularly people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) cannot be overemphasised. Unfortunately, the realisation of this came relatively recent to Nigeria, the continent's most populous nation. For a long while, many Nigerians viewed AIDS as a figment of imagination of some scientists and foreign, not relevance to the black man. As a result, Nigeria has become one of the most affected countries in the world. This study investigated the attitude of teachers, students and parents towards integration of HIV positive adolescents in regular classes in Oke-Ogun, Oyo state. Two hundred and eighty-six participants were covered in this study. Participants were drawn from 42 schools in urban, semi-urban and rural areas in each local government of Oke-Ogun. They include 54 teachers, 118 students and 114 parents.

Data were generated through two specifically designed instruments which tested "knowledge and attitude towards integrating HIV positive adolescents in regular classes and knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The measurement scale for this study was a four point Likert-type scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree). The instrument contained 18 and 17 items for the teachers and parents respectively each testing attitude while the second instrument was a 15-item knowledge test, the

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same for all these participants. Two hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. The data were analysed using ANOVA.

The finding revealed that in all three sub-samples, groups with higher level of education had more positive attitude towards integration of adolescents with HIV/AIDS into regular schools as well as higher knowledge score. Generally, parents showed less favourable attitudes when compared to teachers and students and this may be a possible obstacle to the integration of HIV positive adolescents into regular schools. There is obviously a need for a coordinated public intervention aimed at informing the public about HIV/AIDS.

Suggestion and recommendation were provided to assist the educational sector, policymakers and other stakeholders involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Key words: Knowledge, Attitude, Integration, Adolescents, Students, Regular classes.

Introduction

HIV/AIDS is a global problem. The devastating effect of HIV/AIDS on the world's population, particularly people in Sub-Saharan Africa cannot be overemphasised. For a long while, many Nigerians viewed AIDS as a figment of imagination of some scientist's something unreal and foreign which has no relevance to the black man. As a result of the lip-service paid to this epidemic, AIDS; Nigeria has since become one of the most affected countries in the world.

United State AIDS Infection Disease Surveillance (USAIDS)(2007) estimates that in Nigeria, 3.1 percent of adults aged 15-49years are living with HIV/AIDS. Given its large population size, it has the second highest number of HIV-positive adults in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Thus, ranking third in the world in terms of the total number of people infected aside India and South Africa. Approximately 170,000 people died from Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome in 2007 and over one million children were orphaned by the disease. World Health Organisation (2005) confirmed that AIDS claiming so many lives and that Nigeria's life expectancy was 53.8 years for women and 52.6 years for men. In 2007, these figures had fallen to 46 years for women and 47 years for men as results of enlightens on various ways of contacting with Human Immune Deficiency Virus. The severity of HIV/AIDS epidemic on the

African continent, the speed of its spread and impact on mortality has made AIDS the leading cause of death in Nigeria.

Notable, the number of Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) cases, represents only the clinically visible portion of the occurrence, as many more people are HIV infected that have not been clinically diagnosed in addition, official reporting of AIDS is thought to represent only a fraction of the actual cases. United Nation AIDS Infection Surveillance (UNAIDS) (2005) has predicted that the number of Nigerians infected will continue to rise through 2010. Under the lower-prevalence scenario, the number would rise steadily reaching a 5.5million in 2010. The expectation is that if nothing concrete and urgently is done to stem the spread the number of infected people would continue to rise, and will reach 8.4 million by 2015.

One of the factors contributing to the rapid spread of HIV in the country is the fact that many people do not believe in the existence of the disease. This is as a result that many people have not seen anyone infected with the disease; others perceive the danger posed by HIV/AIDS with fatalism, arguing that a person who is not killed by AIDS will eventually "die of something else". Second, as a result of the continuing economic hardship in Nigeria, commercial sex

workers (CSWs) continue to flourish in urban and rural areas. Findings from one recent study (Eromosele, 2011) suggest that actual use of condoms may be lower than that reported by female commercial sex workers.

Schools worldwide have played a major role in shaping and reshaping the attitude, opinions and even the behaviour of young people. Today's generation of school children have been born into a world where HIV is a harsh, unavoidable reality-a situation that their time at school can help them prepare for and also provide an environment in which people can be educated about HIV. Schools also act as a centre-point for community discussions and activities. As such, they can be a vital tool in monitoring the epidemic and coordinating a response to it. With a capacity to reach a large number of young people with information that can save their lives, basic school education can have such a powerful preventive effect conceived as a "social vaccine"

In some schools today, the prevailing condition is that we have students and even staff infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The group of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), suffer socially and often psychologically, yet the school administration do not pay attention to their plight. In Nigeria, it is commonly believed that HIV infection is

caused by deviant and stagnated behaviour such as homosexual practices, commercial sex workers (CSWs), getting infected by contact and drip use. Sexual promiscuity is seen as the root cause, hence the discrimination against those infected.

The school provides a viable environment to curb societal stigmatisation and discrimination of HIV infected people. This is because schools provide one of the most cost effective and efficient ways of reaching young people. Since the educational section is also seriously threatened by HIV, it should serve as a valuable tool in the fight to establish an environment where people living with HIV are well supported and new infections are prevented.

Through the school, people make friends and bonds are established between teachers, pupils and parents, a school is more than just a place where education takes place. It is often the centre-point where local community activities, can act as the base from which local responses to the AIDS epidemic can be coordinated and strengthened.

Questions have been raised about how much knowledge Nigerian teachers, students and even their parents have on HIV/AIDS, their attitude to PLWHA and their level of integration of HIV infected students into regular classes. Few studies have attempted

to provide answers to some of these questions. This study shall look into how much knowledge and the kind of attitudes that parents, students and teachers have towards PLWHA in the school environment towards integration of HIV positive students into regular classes.

Rational for the Study

As HIV/AIDS epidemic evolves, young people are now the epicenter and bear a disproportionate burden of this pandemic (WHO/UNICEF/UWAIDS, 2002). Increase in the disease appears to be the norm among youth all over the world (Morris, 2003). According to Olaogun (2012) Secondary school youths have been found to be involved in risky sexual behaviours and have indicated poor knowledge and attitude about HIV/AIDS and those affected have been highly stigmatised out of uninformed fears. Stigmatisation created room for extreme misinformation and skepticism – the height of which is total denial of the reality of AIDS which inadvertently encouraged the spread of the disease.

Thus, this study will look into the attitude of parents, teachers and students with respect to integrating HIV positive students into regular classes. It will also examine how well-informed the school is about HIV/AIDS;

its source of information, roles, challenges and threats; and AIDS education in schools and its import for young adolescents shall also be assessed.

Significance of the Study:

This study may provide useful information for schools to act as major advocate for a change of attitude towards PLWHA. Since more children are in schools than ever before, it will provide the opportunity of reaching a large number of young people with information which can save lives. Also, major stakeholders involved in curbing the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic can channel efforts towards the school system, since it has been universally affirmed as being in a position to change young people attitude and behaviours.

The expected findings may also foster a better understanding of the relationship between the school and members of the wider community in increasing their knowledge about HIV/AIDS by means of education. That is, if the community people believe in the teachers then the information the children will bring from school will be taken into consideration by the parents. Hence, in the long run, it is not just students that are educated but also teachers, other members of staff and parents. Teachers can expand

their understanding of the subject while researching for a lesson and pass this information to other adults and their students; the students once informed about HIV/AIDS can go home and tell their parents and friends what they have learnt, and as the information goes round, people get more educated and so the level of fear and ignorance which precipitated stigmatisation of PLWHA will be reduced.

Hypotheses:

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference among the knowledge of parents, students and teachers about HIV/AIDS.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference among the attitude of parents, teachers and students towards integrating HIV positive students in to regular classroom.

Design:

The research is a cross-sectional study using a survey approach. A cross-sectional study is used to gather information on a population at a single point in time. It is also very useful in a situation where people of different ages are sampled and compared along the dimension of a particular construct as it is in this particular study. The survey approach is used because the study is interested in generating data on phenomena

which cannot be directly observed as in attitude and knowledge of parents, students and teachers in the integrating of HIV positive students into regular classes.

Population: The population for this study comprises secondary school students, their parents and teachers teaching them in the 14 local government areas (LGAs) that make up of Oke-ogun area of Oyo State, otherwise known as Oyo North.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The study sample consisted of 54 teachers, 118 students and 114 parents from regular schools in Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State. Schools were selected based on the location; one from rural area, one from semi-urban and one other from an urban area from each LGA of Oyo North. All teachers from the selected schools had equal chances of participating in the study. The questionnaire was filled out during their free-period in the staff room. Randomly chosen JS2 and SS2 students were used to fill the questionnaires during regular classes. The selected students were sent to their parents with a copy of the questionnaire to fill and return to school the next day.

Instruments:

Two instruments were developed "Attitudes towards integration of HIV positive students in regular classes" and "knowledge about HIV/AIDS" questionnaire.

The attitude questionnaires was a 4-point Likert type scale (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree, and 4-Strongly Agree) which originally contained 21 items for parents. Differences in these populations prompted the researcher to adjust the statements included in each form of the questionnaire; therefore the three versions of the questionnaire slightly differed in their contents.

Reliability of all three versions of the questionnaire was satisfactory (Cronbach Alpha was 0.82 for the teachers' scale, 0.86 for the students' scale and 0.92 for the parents' scale). The final versions of the questionnaires used for the students contained 18 items while it contains 17 items for the teacher' and 18 items for parents' scale.

The second instrument was a 15-item knowledge test, the same for all the three samples, which contained 12 True/False/Not sure items and 3 multiple choice questions. The participants got one point for each correct answer and lost a point for each incorrect answer.

Method of Data Analysis

Analysis of variance was used to investigate differences in attitudes and knowledge among the three groups at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis one: There is no significant difference among knowledge about HIV/AIDS among parents, students and teachers. This hypothesis was tested using ANOVA at $\alpha = 0.05$ the result is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: ANOVA on knowledge of Parents, Teachers and Students about HIV/AIDS (n = 228)

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	P	Decision
Between groups	2	32.33	16.16	0.29	0.76	Not Significant
Within group	225	13271.27	58.98			
Total	227	13303.59				

The result from Table 1 shows that F-ratio is 0.274, the degrees of freedom is 2/225 and $P = 0.761$. Since p is greater than 0.05 (i.e. $P > 0.05$) it implies that there is no significant difference among the participants (i.e. $F = 0.29$ and $P = 0.76 > 0.05$). The researcher concludes that there is no significant difference in knowledge about HIV/AIDS among parents, students and teachers.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in attitude among parents, teachers and students towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classroom. This hypothesis was tested using ANOVA at $\alpha = 0.05$ and the result is as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA on the Difference in Attitude among Parents, Teachers and Students towards Integrating HIV Positive Students to regular classes

Source of Variation	DF	Sum of Square	Mean Square	F	P	Decision
Between groups	3	2439.67	813.23	16.53	0.01	Significant
Within group	248	12199.18	49.19			
Total	251	14638.86				

The result from Table 2 shows that $F = 16.53$, $P = 0.01$ and degree of freedom is 3/248. Since $P = 0.01 < 0.05$, it implies that there is significant difference in the attitude of parents, teachers and students towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classroom.

The researcher therefore rejects the null hypothesis in favour of alternative hypothesis and concludes that there is significant difference in attitude of parents, teachers and students towards integrating HIV positive students in to regular classroom. Given that there is significant difference, the null hypothesis is rejected; Table 3 shed more light on the direction of difference. Therefore post hoc analysis of Scheffee was used.

Table 3: Post Hoc Analysis Showing the Direction of Difference in the Attitude of Participants towards Integration of HIV Positive Students into Regular Classroom

Education	N	Subject For $\alpha = 0.05$	
		1	2
Students	25	*	
Parents	45	*	*
Teachers	31	*	*

The result from Table 3 shows that students are significantly different from parents and their teachers. There are two categories of people as regards the attitude of participants towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classes.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis One There is no significant difference in the knowledge of parents, students and teachers about HIV/AIDS.

The result indicates that there is no significant difference in knowledge about HIV/AIDS among parents, students and teachers. This may be so because Nigeria socio-cultural advancement has led to the acquisition of and exposure to print and electronic media such as magazines, TV sets, internet connectivity, mobile phones and video cassette VCD players, satellites TVs such as DSTV which can play minor promotions on control of HIV/STIs and other-related diseases at an early period of their lives. Also, there are benefits from viewing some television shows, such as the promotion of positive aspects of social behaviours among

the people. This finding is in line with Olaogun (2012) in a study carried out at Oke-ogun area found a positive association between good knowledge concerning HIV/AIDS. A higher level of knowledge and more positive attitudes among participants have also been reported by Eromosole (2011). The participants in the present study were less likely to be able to live in the same house with a person having HIV/AIDS without worry. It is possible that the participants did not get sufficiently accurate information on HIV/AIDS ways of transmission.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the attitude of parents, teachers and students towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classroom. This hypothesis is rejected in favour of alternative hypothesis. Teachers and parents had better attitudes than students. Parents who did not finish primary school and those who completed primary school and teachers who had higher education were not different as regards their attitude towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classes but the student themselves were significantly different to their teachers and parent's attitude towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classes. The students show significantly poorer attitude than other groups (teachers

and parents). This finding is against Kovac (2003) that parents did not let their first grade children attend school with an HIV positive counterpart. The results also lend credence to the findings of Olaogun (2012) who stated that attitude mediated self-regulated behaviour among individuals. The findings as well corroborated that of Eromosole (2007) who noted that individuals need to have positive attitude to be successful in life.

Peculiarity of the Study

Some remarkable features about the research are as follows. Notably, most previous studies carried out on the attitude of school environment towards integration of HIV-positive pupils into regular classes and knowledge about HIV/AIDS is mostly foreign; however this study focused on a local population.

Few studies were carried out on integration of HIV/AIDS positive students into regular class in this part of the world despite government and NGO's efforts to make sure that there is adequate awareness of the HIV/AIDS dangers. This study is therefore peculiar because it is among the first attempt here to investigate the perception of teachers, parents and students towards integrating HIV positive students into regular classes in Nigeria.

Suggestion for further Study

In view of the fact that there is no finality in research, this study area is open to further investigations and challenges. There are some good reasons why more work should be done to extend knowledge frontier on this study area. In view of the limitations noted in the study it necessary to replicate the study in other geo-political zones in the country.

Further work is needed on the evaluation of the pattern of stigmatisation of adolescents because an understanding of the level of stigmatisation among adolescents will reveal the level of knowledge and attitude of parents towards HIV/AIDS positive individuals because parents and teachers are the role models for adolescents.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study.

It is essential that behavioural change agents communicate and build confidence of the stigmatised PLWHA on regular basis at every contact.

Clinical psychologists and social workers should also partner with behavioural change agencies such as church, mosque, home and societies in fostering stigma coping for PLWHA aim at reducing stigmatisation.

Further, the teachers and parents should

set good examples for their students/wards to be able to cope and tolerate people living with HIV/AIDS, by being caring, loving and supportive, instead of leaving them to their fate.

These students should be educated properly on the route of transmission of HIV/AIDS, as this will change their attitude towards people living with HIV/AIDS and it is another form of enhancing their knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion

This study investigated attitude and knowledge of teachers, students and parents towards integrating the HIV/AIDS positive students into regular classroom or schools. Based on the findings, it is concluded that positive attitude of parents and teachers may be due to media interest, raised before this study.

More public discussion to provide information about this sensitive issue is needed to make Nigerian populace more aware of the problem of HIV positive person in the society.

The incident that happened in Nigeria showed that fear is still the most dangerous enemy which can only be overcome if people work together towards a more positive and educated community.

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