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Influence of HIV/AIDS on Adolescent in Secondary Schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria

Eze Joseph Chukwumemeka¹

Department of Biology Education

ezejosephc@gmail.com 07032674991

&

Ikenazor Ifeoma Jane²

Department of Chemistry Education

janeikenazor12@gmail.com 08035369187

Institute of Ecumenical Education, ^{1&2}

Thinkers corner Enugu, Enugu state

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Abstract

This study was designed to determine the influence of HIV/AIDS on adolescents in secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. Their personal and socio-economic characteristics were considered. All the government secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State were purposively selected. 40 persons living with HIV/AIDS from the schools were selected for the study. Two research questions guided the study and statistics like frequency distribution, percentages and mean were used for data analysis. Structured questionnaire was used to get information from the respondents. The results of the study revealed that majority of students living with HIV/AIDS within the study area are young people whose academic productivity dwindled and declined when HIV/AIDS sets into their lives. The conclusion is that HIV/AIDS deprived them from their academic ability.

Keywords: Influence, HIV/AIDS, Adolescence, Secondary schools Enugu.

Introduction

HIV Infection and AIDS are pandemic and pose one of the greatest challenges to global public health. The basic mode of transmission was through blood transfusion and sexually transmitted infection (WHO 2001).

The word HIV means Human Immunodeficiency Virus, it is a virus that attack cells in the immune system, which is our body's natural defence against illness. The virus destroys a type of white blood cell in the immune system called the T-helper cell, and make copies of itself inside these cells. T-helper cells are also referred to as CD₄ cells. As HIV destroys more CD₄ cells and make more copies of itself, it gradually weakens a person's immune system and renders it very weak that the person's body cannot protect itself against disease (Villarreal, 2013). This is when the situation degenerates to AIDS. AIDS mean Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. This is a deadly disease. A person is said to have AIDS when his/her immune system is too weak to fight off infections and he/she develops certain defining symptoms and illness. This is the last stage of HIV, when the infection is very advanced, and if left unmanaged will lead to death. There are anti-retroviral drugs that can help an infected person stay healthy and live longer. People who are infected with the virus may look healthy, feel normal for a long time without knowing that they have it. HIV causes combination of symptoms, diseases and infections. AIDS is a complex condition characterized by the collapse of cell body's natural immunity against disease (WHO, 2001).

HIV/AIDS infection might have developed in human population in 1930s or even earlier but it appears to have began in Central Africa as early as the 1950s. It was finally discovered in 1981 for the first at United States of America (USAIDS, 2012). The origin of HIV/AIDS could not be actually stated precisely. When HIV infection struck first in Enugu state, just as assumption were taken about the origin or time of development of HIV infection in the world generally (WHO, 2003).

The reason was simple because HIV infection came through very tiny virus which proved hard for the scientists or the general human knowledge to observe its presence within the human population at exactly the time it emerged (Human Rights Watch 2003). Secondly, not much work has been done on HIV/AIDS in secondary schools in Enugu East L.G.A Enugu state before now. This is because Enugu state was not equipped with instruments for testing of HIV. On the other hand, there were no agencies or organizations like Enugu State Action Committee on AIDS and other organization which have been set up now to fight this pandemic disease. (UNICEF, 2013).

Enugu State is made up of seventeen (17) local government areas. They are Enugu South, Igbo-Eze South, Enugu North, Nkanu West, Udi, Awgu, Oji-River, Ezeagu, Igbo-Eze North, Isi-uzo, Nsukka, Igbo-Ekiti, Uzo-Uwani, Enugu East Aninri, Nkanu East and Udenu but the interested one for the study is Government secondary schools Enugu East L.G.A. The traditional background, which encourages transmission of HIV/AIDS within the setting-such culture includes polygamy, forced marriage and other behavioural actions or habits. These habits may increase the chance of contracting HIV infection. Enugu State being a developing state had adjusted from most of the factors that would have helped the spread of HIV infection from then on, set up HIV/AIDS awareness in secondary schools in Enugu State.

The immune deficiency virus is contracted by having unprotected and sexual relationship with an infected person, sharing sharp object like needles, pins, knives, blades, blood transfusion of infected blood, vaginal and rectal fluids, breast milk and semen.

HIV/AIDS infections are dreaded diseases that have put society into fear in Government Secondary Schools in Enugu East L.G.A of Enugu State. HIV/AIDS have made the state restless because HIV/AIDS infected patients are increasing on daily basis (National Intelligent Council (NIC), 2002). It has been proved that AIDS has no cure and the only cure is death.

All efforts employed to provide a lasting solution to HIV/AIDS has proved abortive. The problem then is that HIV/AIDS infection continuously increases because people do not care about this deadly disease. It can continue to increase as they keep on committing fornication and indiscriminate sex among young people and adults.

Purpose of the Study

1. The study aimed to determine the personal and socio-economic characteristics of adolescents living with HIV/AIDS in secondary schools in Enugu East L.G.A of Enugu State.
2. To ascertain the influence of HIV/AIDS on the academic productivity of the male and female students living with the disease.

Research Questions

The following research Questions will be scientifically addressed in the course of carrying out this research.

1. What are the personal and socio-economic characteristics of the HIV/AIDS patients in Secondary schools in Enugu East L.G.A of Enugu State.
2. What is the influence of HIV/AIDS on the academic productivity of the male and female students living with the disease.

Method:

Design of the Study

The design of the study was survey which made use of structured questionnaire.

Area of study:

The area of the study is Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria which shares boundaries with Isiuzo Local Government Area and Enugu South Local Government Area. The secondary schools in these areas are: St. Patricks college Emene, St. Joseph College Emene, Community Secondary school Emene, New haven Boys secondary school, Modern Ideal College Enugu, Community secondary school Ugwogo nike Enugu, Community secondary school Orgo Ikem, it also includes Enugu state Ministry of Health, Enugu State University teaching hospital (Parklane), National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA), Secretariat and Military Hospital 82 Division Enugu which has HIV/AIDS screening centers which is of great use to the researcher.

Population for the study

The population for the study included all the adolescents living with HIV/AIDS in secondary schools in Enugu, East Local Government Area of Enugu State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample is made up of all government owned secondary schools in the study area they were purposively selected for this study due to the difficulties in identifying the HIV/AIDS patients in view of its secrecy. The researcher relied heavily on the support groups who helped to identify and supply the list of the patients who are their members which was used as the sample frame. The support groups are Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) made up of only those living with HIV/AIDS. The support groups help the patients to source for anti-retroviral drugs, protect them from stigmatization and also make life worth living for their members. Forty (40) HIV/AIDS patients made of

25 female students and 15 male students were purposively selected for the study as supplied by the support groups.

Validation of instrument

The instrument was validated by three lecturers, one from the Department of Science Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology and two specialists in Measurement and Evaluation, Institute of Ecumenical Education, Thinkers corner, Enugu.

Method of Data collection

The Data used for this study were collected through the use of structured questionnaire administered to the respondents by some of the members of HIVAIDS support groups earlier trained by the researcher who were not part of the study. The support groups deals directly with the HIV/AIDS patients and so played vital role in identifying the patients from Government Secondary schools in Enugu state, since the patients confide in them. They guided the patients to fill the questionnaire used for the study probes were used by the enumerators right there to elicit responses from individuals who did not fill in some responses correctly. Forty (40) questionnaire were distributed and all were correctly filled and collected right there by the enumerators. Secondary data were gathered from the support group, medical centers, hospitals, HIV/AIDS screening centers and agencies.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by use of descriptive statistics, such as frequency distribution, percentages and mean objectives 1 and 2 were achieved by use of frequencies, percentages and mean.

Result and Discussions

Table 1.1: Distribution of respondents according to their personal and socio-economic characteristics (n= 40)

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage	Mean (x)
10-19	5	65	35.8
20-29	10	20.6	

Sex		
Male	25	70
Female	15	30

The result of the study revealed the majority (67.6%) of the respondents were young and between the ages of 30-40 with mean age of 34.8. the implication of this finding is that the people living with HIV/AIDS were at their productive age. Table 1.1 also showed that HIV/AIDS is more prevalent among female than male (60% female and 40% male). This is because during heterosexual sex, women are about twice as likely to become infected with HIV from men as men are from women (Akani, 2010). This finding is an agreement with Nwandu (2005) who discovered prevalence of HIV/AIDS among youths between 15-50 years with female ranking higher (58.3%).

The result also showed the majority (37.8%) of the patients are single, (26.7%) are widowed (23.3%) are divorced, while (13.3%) are married. This finding agreed with Akani (2010) who discovered that majority (38%) of those living with HIV/AIDS in Lagos metropolis were single, (27.6%) were married, (11.3%) separated and divorced while 13.8% were widowed. The implication of this finding is that HIV/AIDS are prevalent among people who do not have permanent sex partner.

Sex education is seen as something that should not be discussed in the open. The menace resulting from the behaviour will likely continue to spread, as ignorance will fuel possible destruction of the young and energetic workforce in the rural areas in the long run (Igwe, Onyenweaku and Adiele, 2008). HIV/AIDS depletes the workforce as the people mostly affected by the deadly disease are within the working class.

Table 1.2: Influence of HIV/AIDS on Academic Related productivity of the respondents (n=40)

Academic related productivity	Before HIV/AIDS Sets in		After HIV/AIDS sets in	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Students (male & female) n=40. Male n=15				
Regular class participation	3	100.0	1	44.3
Attending classes punctually and regularly	3	100.0 0	1	44.3
Balanced reasoning	2	66.7	0	00.0
Doing class work timely and regularly	3	100	1	44.3
Carrying out assignments, project timely and regularly	2	66.7	1	44.3
Female n= 25				
Regular class participation	2	68.9	1	33.3
Attending classes punctually and regularly	2	68.2	1	29.6
Balanced reasoning	3	100	0	14.8
Doing class work timely and regularly	2	66.7	1	22.2
Projects timely and regularly	2	66.7	1	25.9

Table 1.2 showed that majority of the male students coped with academic related productivity variables before ever HIV/AIDS set into their lives. For instance 100% male students were regular in attendance to classes, 100% involved themselves in intensive reading, writing and documentation of useful information, 66.7% of male students were doing their classwork timely, and 100% of male students were balanced in their reasoning and carried out their assignments and projects timely and regularly respectively.

Female students coped with academic related productivity variable before ever HIV/AIDS set into their lives. Regular class participation 68.9% were doing their class work, projects, assignments timely and regularly respectively.

On the other hand, when HIV/AIDS sets into the lives of those students, there was a serious decline in their academic productivity. Also majority of the students coped with academic related productivity before HIV/AIDS sets into their lives. However findings revealed that academic productivity of the students declined drastically when HIV/AIDS sets into their lives for instance, the implication of this findings is that HIV/AIDS affects the reasoning ability of all the students living with it and they could not cope with academic processes.

The implication of this finding is that HIV/AIDS impacted negatively on the productivity of the respondents in secondary education. The incidence of HIV/AIDS made the patients/respondents to start performing poorly in their academics. Probably they could not save money for their upkeep and must have suffered stigmatization from relations, neighbours and friends and so could not effectively carryout academic assignment, read intensively, and reason critically. This is in agreement with WHO (2003) which stated that there is a direct relationship between individuals state of health and his productive capacity since HIV/AIDS depletes both energy and knowledge of its victims.

Conclusion

Nevertheless, HIV/AIDS researchers are working relentlessly to develop new anti-retroviral agents that will control replication of drug resistance. It has been seen from the results that female are the highest carrier of HIV/AIDS because of increasing population, so it is quite clear that HIV/AIDS is a reality and has influenced negatively on government secondary schools in Enugu East Local Government area of Enugu and those negative impacts include; Low productivity in terms of learning human and material resources. This research have also revealed that young and single have been affected by the disease HIV/AIDS for now has no cure, prevention is the best weapon at hand.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that student victims, less academic load should be given to them to avoid stress and poor academic performance.
2. Campaign against the spread of HIV/AIDS should be intensified by all and sundry.
3. Stigmatization against those living with HIV/AIDS should be discouraged and legislated against by the government.

4. The establishment of window care foundation enhances the health of HIV/AIDS patients, therefore recommend that more other health care concerning people living with HIV/AIDS should be established.
5. More aggressive health education should be given to the schools and public extensively taken deep into the rural areas for the rural dwellers who may not have been informed properly.

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