

Research Article

KNOWLEDGE OF HIV TRANSMISSION AND PREVENTION AMONG TRADERS

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ABSTRACT

Saharan Africa remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 20 adults (4.9%) living with HIV and accounting for 69% of the people living with HIV worldwide. According to earlier studies getting to zero new HIV infections will require substantial reductions each year in sexual HIV transmission which will require effective combination prevention strategies. This study aimed to assess HIV knowledge of traders in major markets and a popular shopping mall in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. This was a descriptive cross sectional study carried out among 524 market traders on knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention. Data was analyzed using SPSS package version 13.0. Majority (33.8%) of the respondents were within the age range 20-29 years. While 79.4% of the respondents were females, 50.6% had tertiary education. Routes of HIV transmission identified by the respondents included the following: having penetrative sex with HIV-infected person (57.8%), blood transfusion (57.1%), sharing of injection needles (50.6%) and mother to child transmission (47.5%). Modes of HIV prevention identified by the respondents included the following: use of condom during sex (72.7%), avoid sex with HIV infected persons (54.4%), avoid casual sex (53.1%). This result demonstrated still a huge gap in HIV knowledge which urgently needs to be filled. Intensified continuous education is imperative in this group to intimate them with accurate knowledge in key areas of HIV transmission and prevention.

Key Words: *HIV Knowledge, Transmission, Prevention, Traders, Markets.*

INTRODUCTION

An estimated 0.8% of adults aged 15-49 years worldwide were living with HIV, although the burden of the epidemic continues to vary considerably between countries and regions. Sub-Saharan Africa remains most severely affected, with nearly 1 in every 20 adults (4.9%) living with HIV and accounting for 69% of the people living with HIV worldwide (UNAIDS, 2012). Over the past three decades, HIV/AIDS has claimed the lives of more than 30 million Africans (Department of International Development, 2011). The UNAIDS reported that young people and increasingly girls, account for most cases of new HIV/AIDS infections in Nigeria (UNAIDS, 2004). The correlation between high-risk behavior and HIV/AIDS knowledge are strongly related in literatures (Ukwuani *et al.*, 2003; Taffaet *et al.*, 2002).

According to Schwartländer *et al.*, (2011); Hankins and de Zalduondo, (2010), getting to zero new HIV infections will require substantial reductions each year in sexual HIV transmission which will require effective combination prevention: using behavioural, biomedical and structural strategies in combination, both intensively in specific populations in concentrated epidemics and across the whole population in generalized epidemics. Numerous studies have been done to assess the HIV-related knowledge of the Nigerian population especially the unskilled workers. According to a study by Ekanem *et al.*, (2005) in which they carried out assessment of intra city commercial bus drivers and motor park attendants, the men knew HIV/AIDS was transmitted through sexual intercourse and having multiple sexual partners predisposes one to the virus. In another study of Sexual networking among market women in Benin City, Omorodion (1993), found the women were at a high risk of contracting the disease due to high prevalence of sexual networking while Ojieabu *et al.*, (2011) found HIV/AIDS knowledge in areas of transmission and prevention among commercial motorcyclists in Lagos not adequate to curtail the spread of HIV/AIDS.

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The present study was embarked upon to assess HIV knowledge base of those who trade in major markets and a popular shopping mall in Sagamu Local Government Area of Ogun state.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Location

The study was carried out in three major markets and a shopping mall in Sagamu local government area of Ogun State. The markets were Oja-Oba, Falawo, Sabo and Ijokun Shopping mall.

Study Population

A minimum sample size of 524 market men and women calculated through appropriate statistical method were enrolled for this study. The number was determined by a standard normal deviation set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95% confidence level and a margin of sampling error acceptable set at 5%.

Study Design

This was a descriptive cross sectional study carried out among market men and women in Sagamu.

Research Instrument

The research tool was a pretested questionnaire comprising three sections namely; demographic characteristics, knowledge of HIV transmission and prevention. The instrument was assessed for clarity and comprehensiveness of content through pretesting. Some ambiguous questions were re-worded based on the feedback from the pretest and validity assessment.

Procedure

The purpose of the research was explained to the participants as they were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Consent was sought and obtained from the respondents before the administration of copies of the questionnaires which were retrieved immediately after completion. A total of 550 copies of the questionnaire were administered to market men and women, 524 were correctly filled and retrieved.

Inclusion / Exclusion Criteria

Potential participants were market men and women who traded their wares in these markets while those who came to buy from them and passersby were excluded.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS package version 13.0. Descriptive analyses of frequencies and percentages were generated for all the variables except where specified.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents

Majority (33.8%) of the respondents were within the age range 20-29years, with those age less than 20years having the least percentage (6.3%). While the majority (79.4%) of the respondents were females, respondents with tertiary education had the highest representatives (50.6 %) and 64.7% had monogamous setting (table 1).

Respondents' Knowledge of HIV Transmission Routes

Having penetrative sex with HIV-infected person was identified as a route of HIV transmission by 57.8% of the respondents, blood transfusion (57.1%), sharing of injection needles (50.6%), sharing of shavers blade (49.8%), mother to child transmission (47.5%), penetrative anal sex (16.8%) while others were mosquito bites (4.1%), shaking hands with HIV-infected persons (0.6%), sharing food with persons suffering from AIDS (2.1%), being in a place where HIV-infected persons sneezes or coughs (4.0%) (Table 2).

Respondents' Knowledge of HIV Prevention

Modes of prevention identified by the respondents included the following: use of condom during sex (72.7%), avoid sex with HIV infected persons (54.4%), avoid casual sex (53.1%), rejecting transfusion of unscreened blood (52.5%), avoid sex with prostitutes (51.7%), not sharing injection needles with others (51.3%). Others included having sex only with a faithful uninfected partner (46.9%), abstain from penetrative sex (40.6%), avoid sex before marriage (33.4%) (table 3).

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Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Gender	Frequency (n=524)	Percentage (%)
Male	108	20.6
Female	416	79.4
Total	524	100
Age (years)		
> 20	33	6.3
20 - 29	177	33.8
30-39	143	27.3
40-49	128	24.4
50-59	43	8.2
Total	524	100
Family		
Monogamous	339	64.7
Polygamous	185	35.3
Total	524	100
Educational background		
No formal education	21	4.0
Primary level	39	7.4
Secondary level	199	38.0
Tertiary level	265	50.6
Total	524	100

DISCUSSION

The respondents were mainly within the youth age bracket of 20-49years which indicates the knowledge base of this group of the population is vital in the transmission and prevention of HIV in the Nigerian society. The WHO estimates that youths ages 15 to 24 comprise 50% of all new HIV infections and consequently must be targeted for education in decreasing transmission and reducing the stigmatization of an HIV diagnosis (WHO, 2004).The respondents had average knowledge in some key areas and very poor knowledge in others in respect to transmission and prevention. With 50% having tertiary education, one would have expected this group to demonstrate high knowledge in both areas but these respondents had barely an average knowledge.

This is poorer than what was found in some previous studies (Ojieabu WA and Eze UIH, 2011; Sreenenet *al.*, 2007) but agrees with Paul, (2011) and Cheri *et al.*, (2005)'s studies. A persistent low knowledge of vertical transmission of HIV has continued to be recorded as can be seen in this work and in previous studies (Ezegwuiet *al.*, 2005; Alemuet *al.*, 2004). Individuals' knowledge of HIV transmission and accurate assessment of their own risk has been found to be among key factors in adoption of safer sexual practices (UNAIDS, 2001).

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Table 2: Knowledge of Route of Transmission

Knowledge of route of transmission	Frequency (n=524)	Percentage (%)
Mosquito bites.	21	4.0
Penetrative sex with HIV-infected person.	303	57.8
Penetrative anal sex.	88	16.8
Contact with blood of HIV-infected persons.	224	42.7
Shaking hands with HIV-infected persons.	3	0.6
Living in the same house with HIV-infected persons.	5	1.0
Sharing the same bed with HIV-infected persons.	14	2.7
Sharing of injection needles.	265	50.6
Sharing food with persons suffering from AIDS.	11	2.1
Public toilets	33	6.3
Sharing of shavers blade	261	49.8
Blood transfusion	299	57.1
Mother to child transmission	249	47.5
Being in a place where HIV-infected persons sneezes or coughs	21	4.0

Accurate knowledge regarding possible routes of transmission is not only crucial for decreasing the infection rate, it is also important to dispel persistent myths as partial knowledge can further perpetuate the risk of infection (Babakian *et al.*, 2004).

Poor knowledge and misconceptions about HIV/AIDS are key factors in people's lack of efforts at prevention. United Nations against AIDS (UNAIDS, 2008) estimated that only 18 percent of women and 21 percent of men between the ages of 15 and 24 correctly identify ways to prevent HIV.

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Table 3: Knowledge of prevention against HIV/AIDS

Knowledge of prevention of HIV/AIDS	Frequency (n=524)	Percentage (%)
Avoid casual sex	278	53.1
Use of condom during sex	381	72.7
Avoid sex with HIV infected persons	285	54.4
Avoid sex with prostitutes	271	51.7
Not sharing of injection needles with others	269	51.3
Avoid contact with HIV-infected persons	62	11.8
Having sex only with a faithful uninfected partner	246	46.9
Avoid anal sex	50	9.5
Avoid sex before marriage	173	33.4
Reject transfusion of unscreened blood	275	52.5
Abstain from penetrative sex	213	40.6
No way can a person avoid HIV infection	48	9.2

Sreenen *et al.*, 2007 found in their study that comprehensive knowledge on prevention of sexual transmission of HIV was low as only 29.5% both correctly identified ways of preventing sexual transmission of HIV and rejecting major misconceptions about HIV transmission. Strategies suggested for decreasing infection rates include, among others, social marketing of condoms, peer education for groups with highest infection rates (such as sex workers), mass media concerning social and cultural customs that expose participants to heightened risk, voluntary counselling and testing for those who believe themselves to be infected, and school-based programmes (Gallant and Maticka-Tyndale, 2004)

Conclusion

This result demonstrated still a huge gap in HIV knowledge as per the subject matter which urgently needs to be filled. According to Medel-Anonuevo (2008) HIV literacy programs on HIV transmission and knowledge were found to change negative attitudes among young Ethiopians. Intensified continuous education is imperative in this group to intimate them with accurate knowledge in key areas of HIV

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transmission and prevention. This will help at best eliminate or at worse reduce the burden of this scourge from our societies.

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