

**PERCEPTION OF HIV/AIDS PREVENTION STRATEGIES AMONG THE YOUTH
IN FARMING COMMUNITIES OF OSUN STATE, NIGERIA. .**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the perception of some selected HIV/AIDS prevention strategies among youths in farming communities of Osun State. It specifically examined their socio economic and demographic characteristics, perception, attitude and practice of the strategies. It further assessed respondents' sources of information, frequency of use and the factors influencing the use of the HIV/AIDS prevention strategies. This was with a view to determining respondents' level of knowledge.

Six Local Government Areas (LGAs), namely, Odo-Otin, Egbedore, Ife Central, Atakunmosa West, Ejigbo, and Iwo were purposively selected from the 30 LGAs in the state to represent the areas of high (Ejigbo and Ife – Central), medium (Egbedore and Atakunmosa West) and low (Odo – Otin and Iwo) HIV occurrences in the State. From the six LGAs, eighteen communities were randomly selected based on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS from which proportionate sampling technique was used to select 270 youths (135 males and 135 females) respondents of between 15 and 24 years. Data collected through the use of interview schedule and focus group discussion (FGD) were analysed using means, standard deviation and percentages while Chi – Square and Correlation analyses were used to test the hypotheses.

The results showed that the mean age of the respondents was 19.2 ± 2.6 years, while respondents' first sexual experience was at a mean age of 12.3 ± 6.9 years. The results further showed that the population consisted of about 54% Muslims, 45% Christians and 1% adherents of traditional religion, of which about 44% engaged in full time farming while 34% were students. However, on their secondary source of income, about 30% were engaged in commercial motor cycling (Okada), 10% assisted their parents in non - farm activities (vulcanizing, blacksmith, carpentry and petty trading) and 60% were involved in farming activities. A majority 92% of the

respondents were literate, while their major sources of information about HIV/AIDS were radio (37%), print media (30%) and posters (27%). About (77%) of the respondents had indifferent perception and 72% moderate level of practice of the prevention strategies awhile a majority (74%) were indifferent in their attitude. Seventy six percent of the youths had moderate knowledge of the strategies, namely, abstinence, condom, voluntary counseling and testing, avoiding transfusion of untested blood and untreated sharp objects. Factors influencing the use of HIV/AIDS prevention strategies identified included respondents level of knowledge (71%), individual sexual needs (68%), availability of prevention methods (68%) and finance (67%). Correlation analysis showed a significant but inverse relationship between the levels of perception of the prevention strategies and years of residence ($r = -0.142$; $P < 0.05$), position in the family ($r = -0.144$; $P < 0.05$), age ($r = -0.179$; $P < 0.01$) and years of formal schooling ($r = -0.227$; $P < 0.01$). A significant association was observed between the levels of perception of the prevention strategies and marital status ($\chi^2 = 625.38$, $df = 6$, $P < 0.05$); membership of social organization ($\chi^2 = 310.02$, $df = 4$, $P < 0.05$) and level of practice ($\chi^2 = 256.04$, $df = 4$, $P < 0.05$).

It was concluded that the majority of the youths in the farming communities were indifferent to the HIV/AIDS prevention strategies which predisposes them to low adoption of the strategies. Hence, rural youths in Osun State are vulnerable to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.