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Knowledge and Attitude of Primary School Children Regarding HIV/AIDS in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This is a cross sectional study focused on the knowledge and attitude of Primary school children in both private and public schools in Ibadan North Local Government area in Oyo State, Nigeria concerning HIV/AIDS. Four primary schools were selected by simple random sampling and 50 students each were selected by systematic random sampling from the class register from each (2 private and 2 public) schools. A total of 200 students were sampled from the schools. The children were within the age range of 9-15 years with a mean age of 14.37 years. The data collected on quantitative analysis scales of 0-5 were analysed using t-test at the significance level of 0.05. There was significant relationship between the ages of the primary school children and their knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Children between the ages of 11-15 had better understanding of HIV/AIDS than the younger ones. Furthermore, the children in the private schools were more knowledgeable on the issues of AIDS than children in the public schools. Based on these findings, there should be intensive school based campaign to sensitise pupils especially in the public schools, thereby empowering them with adequate information in order to prevent the behaviour that will lead to the acquisition of HIV/AIDS.

Keywords: Knowledge and attitude, primary school children, HIV/AIDS

Introduction

This is a cross-sectional study focused on the knowledge and attitude of (primary school children in both primary and public schools in Ibadan regarding HIV/AIDS. Human-immune-deficiency virus and Acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) a major global pandemic; over 110 million people are living with HIV/AIDS of which 17.6 million are adults while the children compromised 2.5 million (UNAIDS, 2002). It was estimated by National Action committee for AIDS (NACA) in 2004 that about 4 million Nigerians among them are women, youth and children are living with the virus (NACA, 2004). According to the executive summary of the World Bank on Education and HIV/AIDS, children (5-14) years and youth 15-24 years represent higher risk groups, accounting for some 60% of all new HIV infections in many countries. It is also the one group among whom ignorance is said to be very high and education can yield maximum result in reducing and enhancing behaviour change. Nearly a fourth of Africa's school children, which are quite vulnerable to the disease, live in Nigeria. This number is quite alarming. These children represent a high risk group in the development of HIV/AIDS. Presence of children in any society is a blessing and constitutes the future political and economic power of that nation. Proactive efforts to safeguard the nations resources may include assessing the knowledge and attitude of the primary school children so that relevant action can be taken for health promotive action among them in relation to the disease as these children represent the future leaders in the fight against the disease. It is very important to access how much these children know about HIV/AIDS so as to know how best to educate them about its dangers.

Acquisition of education before they reach the peak vulnerable years is very important and will protect them and the society. The age of adolescence, age of rebellion, age characterised by physical and psychological changes. Psychologically, there are changes evidenced by the desire to engage in sexual intimacy, lack of self control and exposure to peer pressure. The early training that promotes healthy

lifestyles and avoidance of risky behaviour will reinforce this protection. In line with this statement Jackson (2002) stated that there is very little effort in many sub-Saharan African countries (Nigeria inclusive) to increase the level of HIV/AIDS awareness among school children.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is therefore to identify the knowledge and attitude of primary school children regarding HIV/AIDS.

Hypotheses

There is no significant difference between the ages of primary school pupils in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

There is no significant difference between pupils from private and public primary schools in their knowledge towards HIV/AIDS.

Methodology

A cross sectional study was conducted among primary school pupils in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Four primary schools were selected by simple random sampling and 50 pupils each were selected by systematic random sampling from the school's register. The research instrument was a self-constructed questionnaire. The questionnaire was made up of bio data section, knowledge and attitudinal sections. The questionnaires were pre-tested in a primary school other than the ones used for the study. The final questionnaire was a product of the modifications detected by the pretesting.

200 respondents filled the questionnaire well enough for analysis. The questionnaires were self-administered and were personally distributed by the researcher after explaining the purpose of the research to the respondents. The data collected on quantitative analysis scales of 0-5 were analysed using t-test at the significant level of 0.05.

Results

All the 200 questionnaires were retrieved and analysed. The age range of the respondents was between 5-15 years with a mean age of 12 years. The males were 105 in number being 52.5% of the population, while the females were 95 (47.5%).

Table I: Demographic Characteristic

Sex	No	Percentage
Male	105	52.5
Female	95	47.5
Religion		
Christian	155	77.5
Islam	45	22.5
Class		
Primary 5	16	8.0
Primary 6	163	81.5
No response	21	10.5

198 of the pupils said that they had heard about HIV/AIDS making 99% while 2 of them did not respond to any question.

Table II: Where did you here about HIV/AIDS?

TV	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
Radio	19	9.5	181	90.5
School	8	4.0	192	96.0
My Teacher	5	2.5	195	97.5
Church	9	4.5	191	95.5
TV	161	80.5	39	19.5
Mosque	1	5.0	199	99.5
Parents	21	10.5	179	89.5
Others	2	1.0	198	99.0

Table III: Methods of contacting HIV/AIDS

Responses	No	Percentage
Correct	73	36.5
Partially Correct	33	16.5
Incorrect	54	27.0
No Response	40	20
Total	200	100%

Table IV: Is there any Cure for AIDS?

Question	Yes	No	No Response
Is there any cure for AIDS	77 (61%)	122 (38.5)%	1 (1)%
Can a child die from AIDS	192 (96%)	8 (4)%	
Does HIV show on the face	145 (72.5)%	52 (26.0)%	3 (1.5)%

126 of the pupils say that they will die if they per chance they contact AIDS while majority of the pupils said that they would commit suicide.

There was significant difference in the knowledge of HIV/AIDS between the children in the private schools and the public schools. The P Value .012. There was difference in Knowledge of HIV/AIDS between the older and younger children. The difference was however not found to be statistically significant. $X^2 = 0.05$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.36$

Discussion

In assessing the knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the primary schools students the research revealed that the pupils were generally knowledgeable on this dreaded disease, ranging from what the diseases is, to the mode of contact. They provided information about where they have heard about the disease but their knowledge is not well grounded as to some of them were still saying that the disease will show on the

face. There is need for proper education and planned prevent on methods.

The significant difference in the knowledge of HIV/AIDS between private and the public schools with a p. value of .012, may be attributed to the parental status of those attending private schools which are higher than those attending public schools, their children are better exposed in terms of where they live, travelling and holidaying experiences they have had previously. All these may have exposed them to the knowledge of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, the private schools management exposes their pupils as well, as they take them for debates, excursions, drama and inter-house spots competitions. All these may have accounted for the difference in their knowledge. Being knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS is very important at this early age when they are not sexually active developmentally as this will help them imbibe behaviour that will keep them free from HIV/AIDS. This statement is in line with the findings of Reddy, and McCauley (2003) where an effect of knowledge on HIV/AIDS was an important factor for behaviour change. These children who are not sexually active can acquire this behaviour very early in life. Increase in knowledge as exhibited by the private school's pupils may lay foundation for behaviour change in future.

This is in line with the findings of Reddy (2003) where the teenagers approved abstinence Even though there was no significant difference between the ages of the pupils. The senior ones between 10-15 are more knowledgeable in HIV/AIDS. This showed that they have been more exposed than the younger ones and they have stayed longer in the school.

It is really frightening to know the responses of these children. It revealed the negative attitude of the society on HIV/AIDS victims. It goes a long way to show also the effect of stigmatisations although the researchers did not find out the reason why they would like to take their lives. That shows the society's negative attitude towards HIV/AIDS subjects.

Recommendation

There should be school based campaign to sensitive the pupils especially those in public schools, thereby empowering them with adequate information in other to prevent the behaviour that will lead to the acquisition of HIV/AIDS. School based HIV prevention strategies should be incorporated into the school's curricula. Abstinence education should be recommended for the pupils. This is because abstinence is the only completely full-proof method of successfully preventing HIV/AIDS.

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