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## **INFLUENCE OF HIV/AIDS KNOWLEDGE ON SEXUAL PRACTICES OF STUDENTS' IN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, EKIADOLOR BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.**

by

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### **Abstract**

*The study assessed the influence of HIV/AIDS knowledge on sexual practices of students in College of Education (COE) Ekiadolor, Edo State. Five Research questions guided the study, and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of all 2015/2016 NCE 3 students in School of Vocational Education, COE, Ekiadolor, Benin City, Edo State Nigeria numbering four hundred and seven (407). A total of one hundred (68 Females and 32 Males) NCE 3 students constituted the study sample using multi stage sampling technique. The study used Questionnaire titled HIV/AIDS Knowledge and Sexual practices of students Questionnaire (HAKSPSQ) data collection instrument. The instrument had reliability coefficients of 0.66. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation and Independent t- test. All null hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance. It was concluded that HIV/AIDS knowledge does not significantly influence sexual practices of students in COE, Ekiadolor. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that there is need for immediate inclusion of moral instruction and sex education in the school curriculum with emphasis placed on knowledge of HIV/AIDS and sexual practices of students.*

**Key words:** HIV/AIDS, Knowledge, Sexual Practices, Students.

### **Introduction**

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) commonly referred to as (HIV/AIDS) has been a global pandemic for the last 30 years, and its spread is yet to be contained, in spite of the availability of antiretroviral therapy.



The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), Caused by the Human Immune deficiency virus (HIV) was first identified in the early 1980s in United States of America and has now spread like 'wildfire' to all parts of the universe. (UNAIDS, 2001). The spread of HIV in any community is in part determined by its members' knowledge concerning safe sexual practices and prevention of HIV transmission. Nigeria is estimated to have HIV/AIDS infection rate of 2.36% resulting in about 3,300,000 infected with HIV of its population of 140,431,790 people (NPC, 2013). An estimated 220,000 people die each year from HIV/AIDS with an approximately 2,500,000 orphans living in Nigeria resulting from loss of parents to HIV/AIDS. The youth (age 20-29 years) and the young adult (age 30-34 years) have been identified as the groups that have the highest prevalence rate in Nigeria at 46% (Whiteside, Hickey, Engeobo & Tomlinson, 2003). However, according to the latest data from the Nigerian government around 10% of the global population of people with HIV lives in Nigeria. National data in Nigeria suggests that 1.3% of the young women (15-24 years old) and 0.7% of young men are living with HIV (NPC, 2013).

The need for aggressive campaign against HIV/AIDS cannot be underestimated because of its pandemic and negative influence on social and economic life of affected youths and young adults who are supposed to be contributing positively and heavily to the society. Some of these negative influences include poor state of health for the affected individual and reduce productivity.

According to Peltzer (2013) Lack of adequate knowledge has been implied as a major reason for high risk heterosexual behavior and in Nigeria, the most common mode of transmission of HIV is via sexual intercourse (Okpani & Okpani 2000). Many scholars have reiterated that multiple sex partners, early sexual experience and inconsistent use of condoms have been responsible for the rise in the disease among young people such as those in the tertiary institutions. These suggest that a positive attitude towards sexual health in young people or HIV/AIDS preventive strategies/measures could produce desirable behaviors and reduce risk (Akpabio, Asusu, Fajemilehin & Ofi, 2010). Adolescents are identified as the group with the highest risk of acquiring the infection since they are sexually active, take greater risk and believe in their invulnerability (Akpabio, et al 2010). Some other reasons suggested in literature include high level of premarital sex, short term sexual relationships, vulnerability to sexual violence, and exploitation of females by older rich men a practice which seems to be common among the female students. The majority of students in tertiary institutions are single, young adults who exhibit a lot of youthful exuberance. This with the liberal nature of campus life predisposes them to high risk sexual behavior (Onwuezobe, 2009). It is for reasons such as these, that this age group is at more risk of becoming infected with HIV and other related sexually transmitted infections. In addition, peer pressure, lack of life experience, lack of knowledge, early sexual debut, multiple sexual partners, alcohol and drug use characterized the life of some college students (Agboola, 2010). Sexual activity among unmarried college students in Nigeria is high and rising, despite the growing associated problems of premarital sex such as STIS and HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, and illegal abortion. Majority of sexual intercourse among adolescents are unprotected.

Knowledge towards STIS including HIV/AIDS may help predict sexual practices in relation to the use of protective from the risk of infection with HIV/AIDS. Risky sexual behavior include having multiple sexual partners, frequently changing partners, engaging obvious risky sex partners such as commercial sex workers, not using any protective measure, especially not using condoms and early sex initiation among others (Agboola, 2010). Perhaps, for these reasons, increasing numbers of Nigerian adolescents are being infected with HIV and other STIS. In Nigeria, educational institutions fall into three major types which are the primary, secondary and tertiary levels. (Whiteside, Hickey, Engeobo & Tomlinson 2003). The central focus of this paper is to investigate influence of HIV/AIDS knowledge on sexual practices of students of College of Education, Ekiadolor (COE) Benin City, Edo State. The findings of the study will find its relevance among students, parents, staff, curriculum planners, health societies, NGOS and the society at large.

## Statement of the Problem

HIV/AIDS is an infectious disease which seems to have claimed the lives of many estimated to be well over 22,000 yearly. In the recent past, there had been series of campaign, jingles among others about the



most dreaded HIV/AIDS by the government of the day, health parastatals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), schools, churches and even in some social gatherings. Campaign on how to prevent the spread of the disease has been well established to an extent that some sexual protective method such as the use of condom have been given as free gifts both for males and females in some occasions. It therefore, becomes worrisome that despite all these information about the knowledge of HIV/AIDS by the different bodies, lifestyle of the youths towards this infection and its negative impact on the society is almost disturbing and alarming. Reasons for the alarming state could be due to peer pressure, youthful exuberance and freedom from home to hostel life.

The focus on young people is because people aged between 15 and 24 years of age comprise about 20 percent of the world's population and account for 60 percent of the new HIV infections each year (Arulogun&Adefioye, 2010). It is assumed that young people lack information adequate enough for them to make informed decisions about sexual practices and solutions to the consequent problems that may arise from such behavior (Akpabio, et, al, 2010). Some other reasons suggested by literature include high level of pre- marital sex, multiple, short term sexual relationships and vulnerability to sexual violence. It is on this premises that the researcher intends to investigate whether these students are not well informed or knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS and their sexual practices. The study seeks therefore, to investigate if students of COE, Ekiadolor make informed decisions on their sexual practices. The problem therefore is whether the students of COE, Ekiadolor are knowledgeable on HIV/AIDS and what are their sexual practices?

### **Purpose of study**

The main purpose of study is to access the influence of HIV/AIDS knowledge on sexual practices of students in College of Education Ekiadolor. Specifically, the purposes were to;

1. assess the extent to which students of COE, Ekiadolor are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS;
2. identify the level of common sexual practices of students in College of Education, Ekiadolor;
3. determine the influence of HIV/AIDS knowledge on sexual practices of students in College of Education, Ekiadolor;
4. determine the difference between the male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS;
5. determine the difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions that are based on specific objectives of the paper guided the conduct of the study.

1. To what extent are students of COE, Ekiadolor knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS?
2. What is the level of common sexual practices of students of COE, Ekiadolor?
3. How does HIV/AIDS knowledge influence sexual practices of students in College of Education Ekiadolor, Benin City
4. Is there any difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS?
5. Is there any difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices?

### **Hypotheses**

Research questions 4 and 5 were hypothesized and tested at 0.05% level of significant.

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS.



HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices.

### **Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study covers the influence of HIV/AIDS knowledge of sexual practices of 300 level students in College on Education, Ekiadolor. The study is delimited to 300 level students in School of Vocational Education, College of Education, Ekiadolor Benin City, Edo State. College of Education, Ekiadolor is situated in Ekiadolor Benin City, Edo State. Edo state is in South- south part of Nigeria and has eighteen (18) Local Governments and three (3) Senatorial Districts. Its capital is Benin City.

### **Methodology**

#### **Design of the Study**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design as data were collected from representative sample of COE, Ekiadolor students using Modified Likert Scale Questionnaire. Descriptive survey research design was used because the researcher collected information from a large population using sample to generalize. This design is relevant when the researcher is required to undertake a systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data to give account of characteristics of particular individuals, groups, or the state of events without the manipulation of data (Akpabio&Ebong, 2009).

#### **Population of the Study**

The target population for this study consisted of all NCE3 students in School of Vocational Education, COE, Ekiadolor, Benin City. The total population is Four hundred and Seven (407), 208 Females and 199 Males from four departments; Agriculture Education, Business Education, Home Economics Education and Fine Arts Education. The choice of only one school stem from the researchers determination to carry out extensive and intensive investigation, which can be gotten when research instrument is consecrated in a place and also is due to the fact the HIV/AIDS is common among youth of such age group.

#### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample for the study comprised 100 students (68 Females and 32 Males) 300 Level students in the School of Vocational Education. Multistage sampling technique was used in the selection of the sample as follows.

Stage 1: involved stratifying the college into schools using cluster selection.

Stage 2: involved stratifying the school into departments using cluster selection.

Stage 3: involved stratifying the students of the school into males and females.

Stage 4: involved using proportionate stratified sampling technique for selecting 68% female and 32% male students of 300 level in the School of Vocational Education as respondents sampled. Ali (2006) suggested that 10-30% of the population making up the sample is reasonably adequate and representative of the population.

#### **Instrument for Data Collection**

The study used Questionnaire titled HIV/AIDS knowledge and sexual practices questionnaire that was developed based on the study objectives and research questions. The instrument was divided into section A and B.

**Section A:** Socio- demographic information: This section was structured to elicit information on the respondents such as age, gender, marital status and parents' level of education.

**Section B:** This elicits information on HIV/AIDS knowledge and sexual practices of students. Respondents of each item was rated on a 4- point scale ranging from 1 which strongly which indicates strongly disagree to 4 which indicates strongly agree.



## Method of Data Collections

Data was collected from the respondents by administering the instrument, HIV/AIDS knowledge and sexual practices of students (HAKSPSQ). The questionnaires were distributed by the researcher and two (2) trained research assistants. The completed copies were collected on the spot to ensure maximum return. The returned questionnaires generated the data analyzed for the study.

## Method of Data Analyses

Data collected was analyzed with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean  $\bar{x}$  standard deviation (SD) and cross tabulation. The means of the responses were interpreted in line with the points on the 4- point scale. For decision making, the lower limit of the Agreed response categories, which is 2.50, was used as the cut- off point. Any item with a mean response of 2.50 and over was accepted as an influencing factor. Their Null Hypotheses formulated in the study was tested with inferential statistics such as Independent t- test.. All null hypotheses were tested at 0.05% level of significance at which the null hypotheses were either rejected or accepted.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentages
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	32	32.0
Female	68	68.0
Total	100	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
19-23 Years	59	59.0
24-28 Years	33	33.0
Above 29 Years	08	08.0
Total	100	100
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	17	17.0
Single	83	83.0
Total	100	100

Table 1 showed that 32 (32%) male subjects and 68 (68%) female subjects participated in the study comprising 100 (100%) COE students. The table further reveals 59 (59%) of the students were below 19-23 years, 33 (33%) were 24-28 years old, while 08 (08%) were above 29 years. The table showed that 17 (17%) were married while 83 (83%) are single.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent are students of COE, Ekiadolor knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS?

**Table 2:** Mean ratings and standard deviations of respondents on extent of students' knowledge about HIV/AIDS



	Item Statements	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard deviation	Remark
1	HIV is generally a threat in Nigeria Colleges	2.89	1.09	Agree
2	Only persons who engage in risky sexual behaviors can become infected with HIV	2.34	1.15	Disagree
3	Good nutrition, healthiness and fitness can prevent HIV	2.19	1.05	Disagree
4	Only a blood test can confirm HIV infection status of an individual	2.92	1.10	Agree
5	Sexually active females are more prone to contracting HIV compared to sexually active males	2.43	1.03	Disagree
6	AIDS virus cannot survive outside the body of an individual	2.88	1.13	Agree
7	HIV attacks the immune system and makes one vulnerable to other infections	3.08	1.04	Agree
8	Getting bitten by a mosquito that is carrying the virus from infected person can give HIV	2.37	1.20	Disagree
9	Use of sharp objects after being used by HIV positive individual can cause HIV Infection	3.04	1.13	Agree
10	Sharing eating utensils with someone who is HIV positive is a risk factor	2.37	1.08	Disagree
11	Having oral sex without using condom/ barrier can cause HIV	2.62	1.16	Agree
12	Latex condoms are more effective and protective than natural skin condoms in preventing HIV	2.77	1.04	Agree
13	A mother who is HIV positive can infect her child through breast milk	2.93	1.11	Agree
14	AIDS is a medical condition in which your body cannot fight off diseases	2.89	1.00	Agree
15	Using alcohol or drug before or during sex can increase a person's risk of getting HIV	1.84	.95	Disagree
16	Having an STDS can increase a person's risk of getting HIV	2.82	.89	Agree
17	Kissing an HIV infected individual can cause HIV infection	2.27	1.05	Disagree

The decisions rule for the research questions were based on real limit of values. Items with mean response equal to or above 2.50 were used for the decision 4- pointy scale. This was accepted as an influencing factor and taken as "Agree" while any mean rating lower than 2.50 was taken as "Disagree". The data presented in Table 2 shows that the mean of the items ranged from 1.84 to 3.08. Ten of the items had their means above the cut- off point of 2.50 indicating that the respondents agree to ten of the items underlying extent of how knowledgeable they are about HIV/AIDS and disagree with seven items. This indicated that students of COE, Ekiadolor are knowledge about HIV/AIDS. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.8 to 1.20 indicated that the respondents were close in their responses.



**Research Question 2:** What is the level of common sexual practices of students of COE, Ekiadolor?

**Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviations on respondents on their sexual practice**

S/N	Item Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	I have multiple sex partners	1.64	.95	Disagree
2	I enjoy taking alcohol or other sedatives before having sex.	1.78	1.02	Disagree
3	I love watching Pornographic pictures and films before having sex	1.72	.96	Disagree
4	I engage in sexual intercourse everyday	1.74	1.02	Disagree
5	I often visit the commercial sex workers in their brothel.	62	.80	Disagree
6	I frequently have sexual intercourse without using condom	1.49	.81	Disagree
7	I always negotiate safe sex with my partner	2.29	1.07	Disagree
8	I don't care to know the HIV status of my partners before engaging them in sexual relationship	2.53	1.18	Agree
9	I enjoy oral sex	2.03	1.02	Disagree
10	I enjoy anal sex better than the regular virginal sex	1.75	1.03	Disagree
11	HIV as a risk factor targeted at reducing enjoying sexual life	1.82	1.03	Disagree
12	I always use contraceptive pills before and after sex	1.77	.91	Disagree
13	Position during sex increases enjoyment threshold	2.31	1.13	Disagree
14	I believe in the use of charms to prevent STDS or HIV	1.63	.95	Disagree

The data represented in Table 3 shows that the mean of the items ranged from 1.49 to 2.53. All the items had their means below the cut- off point of 2.50 except one indicating that the respondents agree. The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.80 to 1.18 this indicated that the respondents were close in their responses. The result indicated that the students disagree they have multiple sex partners nor engage in sex daily. They however agree they don't care to know the HIV status of their partners before engaging them in sexual relationship.

**Research Question 3:** How does HIV/AIDS knowledge influence sexual practices of students in College of Education Ekiadolor, Benin City?

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for influence of HIV/AIDS Knowledge on Sexual Practices of Students in College of Education Ekiadolor.**

Sexual Practices Knowledge of HIV/AIDS				
	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Low	1(100.0%)	0(.0%)	0(.0%)	1(100.0%)
Moderate	41(51.3%)	39(48.8%)	0(.0%)	80(100.0%)
High	13(68.4%)	5(26.3%)	1(5.3%)	19(100.0%)
Total	55(55.0%)	44(44.0%)	1(1.0%)	100(100.0%)



Table 4 reveals that 01 respondent that has low knowledge of HIV/AIDS had low sexual practices, Out of the 80 respondents with moderate knowledge of HIV/AIDS 41(51.3%) had low sexual practices 39(48.8%) had moderate sexual practices. Of the 19 respondents with high knowledge of HIV/AIDS 13(68.4%) had low sexual practices, 5(26.3%) had moderate sexual practices and 1 (5.3%) had high sexual practices. Out of the 100 respondents 55(55.0%) had low sexual practices, 44(44.0%) had moderate sexual practices and only 1(1.0%) had high sexual practices. The result revealed that 80(80.0%) of the respondents had knowledge of HIV/AIDS and 55(55.0%) had low sexual practices. This therefore showed the knowledge of HIV/AIDS had little influence on sexual practices of some students of College of Education Ekiadolor.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

**Table 5: t-test analysis of difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS.**

Group	N	Mean( $\bar{x}$ )	Standard Deviation	df	t-cal	Sig.(2-tail)
MALE	32	46.41	7.60	98	1.75	.084
FEMALE	68	43.82	6.54			
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>					

a=0.05

Table 5 shows a calculated t-value of 1.75 and a p-value of .084, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the P value of .084 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $P>0.05$ ), the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS is retained. Consequently, there is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices.

**Table 6: t-test analysis of difference between male and female students' of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices.**

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-Cal	Sig (2-tailed)
Male	32	26.63	7.19	98	.501	.617
Female	68	25.85				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>					

a=0.05

Table 6 shows a calculated t-value of .501 and a p-value of .617, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. Since the P value of .617 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05 ( $P>0.05$ ), the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices is retained. Consequently, there is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices.

## Discussion of Findings

The study assessed the influence of HIV/AIDS knowledge on sexual practices of students in College of



Education Ekiadolor. The findings of the research question one indicated that students of COE, Ekiadolor are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS. This finding agree with Araoye & Fakeye (1998); Fawole, Azuzu, & Oduntan, (1999); Okpani & Okpani, (2000) and Adegoke, John & Corneille, (2011) whose studies revealed good knowledge and high level of HIV/AIDS awareness and its transmission among adolescents in Nigeria. This finding disagree with Agboola, (2010 and Akpabio et al. (2010) who posit that lack of knowledge, early sexual debut characterized the life of some college students. This also disagree with (FRN, 2012) who discovered that in 2009 only 23 percent of schools were providing life-skills based HIV education, and just 25 percent of men and women between the ages of 15 and 24 correctly identified ways to prevent sexual transmission of HIV in 2010. The findings of research question two revealed that the level of common sexual practices of students of COE, Ekiadolor is low to moderate. The present result contradicts Onwuezobe, (2009) who stated that the liberal nature of campus life predisposes majority of students in tertiary institutions to high risk sexual behavior because they are single, young adults who exhibit a lot of youthful exuberance. The findings also disagree with Agboola, (2010) who discovered that college students engage in risky sexual behavior including having multiple sexual partners, engaging obvious risky partners such as commercial sex workers, not using any protective measure like condoms and early sex initiation among others.

The findings of research question three showed that knowledge of HIV/AIDS had little influence on sexual practices of some students of College of Education Ekiadolor. The explanation for this is that despite being knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS some (48.8%) still engage in moderate sex. This did not conform with Akpabio, Asusu, Fajemilehin & Ofi, (2010) who postulated that lack of adequate knowledge has been implied as a major reason for high risk heterosexual behavior among young people such as those in tertiary institutions. The findings of hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their knowledge of HIV/AIDS. This could be because sex education is taught to both boys and girls in schools. This is consistent with Adegoke, John & Corneille, (2011) and Girish, Singh & Kumar (1998), who found no significant difference in knowledge score about HIV/AIDS between boys and girls in Nigeria and India. Araoye's & Fakeye's (1998) findings among Nigerian sample are also similar in nature. They found no significant differences between male and female adolescents on knowledge of route of transmission of HIV/AIDS. This does not corroborate the findings of FRN (2012) who discovered that HIV prevention knowledge is significantly less among girls (aged 15-19) compared to boys. The findings of Ocansey, (2006); Maro, Roberts & Sorensen (2009) and Mahat & Scoloveno, (2006) also differed sharply from this result.

The findings of hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students of COE, Ekiadolor in their sexual practices. This finding is in consonant with Makwe & Ahmad, (2014) who discovered that increasing sexual activity among adolescents and college students (male and female) has been recorded across the globe, Africa and Nigeria leading to increasing incidence of sexually transmitted infections. This findings is not in consonance with the findings of FRN (2012) who discovered that as twice as many girls than boys are engaging in sexual activity before the age of 15 years.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that HIV/AIDS knowledge does not significantly influence sexual practices of students in College of Education Ekiadolor, meaning that HIV/AIDS had little influence on sexual practices of some students of College of Education Ekiadolor but the influence is not significant as some still engage in moderate sex despite being knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made

1. Effect of HIV/AIDS should be circulated among college students to improve their knowledge.
2. Tertiary institution should teach sex education as a compulsory subject for the students to have knowledge of HIV/AIDS and other STIs and correctly identified ways to prevent sexual



transmission of HIV/AIDS,

3. Government, parents and college authorities should act decisively towards stopping the continued growth of all attitudes and behaviors that increase the immoral behaviors among students,
4. Parents should keep strict surveillance on their children /ward and educate them correctly about the danger that lay ahead when illicit sexual practices is being engaged in.
5. There is need for immediate inclusion of morals values and sex education in the school curriculum in the Colleges of Education and more emphasis should be placed on knowledge of HIV/AIDS and sexual practices of students.
6. Further studies should be carried out on ways to prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS.



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