

Perceived Factors Militating Against Zero Prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Imo State, South East of Nigeria

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Abstract

The Acquired Immune-deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is a serious disease of the immune system. It is caused by a retrovirus known as Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV). The disease has caused a serious public health problem since its emergency for more than twenty years (20) ago, so it is vital to look into the factors that are militating against zero prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Imo state. The objectives of the study is to determine the behavioral factors, healthcare delivery factors and religion related factors militating against zero prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Imo state. The study was guided by three research questions and deduced responses using structured questionnaire. A sample size of three hundred and fifty-nine (359) subjects comprising of one hundred and eighty (180) healthcare givers (at Heart to Heart unit of FMC Owerri) and one hundred and seventy-nine (179) People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) attending clinic at FMC Owerri, was used for this study. The sample size was purposively selected given the unique characteristics of sero-positive persons. Results were expressed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The results were presented in tables and bar charts. A total of 70.7% against 29.3% of the respondents indicated agreement on the behavioral factors such as; discrimination, low risk perception, prostitution and early marriage; as factors that work against zero prevalence. Whereas a total of 75.5% of the respondents indicated agreement on the healthcare delivery factors such as; lack of adequate health care facilities, unavailability of anti-retroviral drugs, lack of voluntary counseling services; as militating against zero prevalence. However, 24.2% of the respondents disagreed. Also, 62.1% of the respondents indicated agreement on the religion related factors while 18% disagreed. From the calculated mean and standard deviation, behavioral factors like prostitution and low risk perception are found to be the major factors working against zero prevalence. This is followed by health care delivery factors like lack of healthcare provision in the rural areas and unavailability of anti-retroviral drugs. Recommendations include: government actions towards equipping and improving Health Service Delivery especially in the rural areas of Imo State; Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and HIV support groups synergizing and channeling much of their energy towards grass root awareness and education on prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Keywords: *Militating factors, zero prevalence, HIV/AIDS.*