

HIV PREVALENCE IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

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Actuality. Nigeria remains the most populous country in Africa. According to the 2007 estimates, Nigeria is home to more people living with HIV (about 2,6 million) than any other country in the world, except South Africa and India - where an estimated 5,7 million and 2,4 million people were living with the virus in 2007. The main mode of HIV transmission in Nigeria, as it is in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, is heterosexual contact. Factors that contribute to increasing rates of HIV in Nigeria includes poverty, gender disempowerment, social and financial inequality, STIs, social and religious norms, and political and social changes.

The Aim of the study: to learn the dissemination of HIV infection among the various contingents of Nigerian population, examine the factors contributing to the spreading of HIV.

Results. The prevalence of HIV has grown steadily from 1,8 % in 1991 to 5,8 % in 2001; subsequent surveys in 2003 and 2005 revealed a slight downward trend to 5,0 and 4,4 % respectively. Based on the national prevalence of 4,1 %, it is estimated that 3,1 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria in 2010. Thus, Nigeria has the second highest number of people living with HIV in the world, second only to South Africa (UNAIDS HIV epidemic update 2010). Young people between the ages of 15 to 24 years account for a large portion of the population and also form the majority of the victims of unwanted pregnancies, complication from unsafe abortions, and sexually transmitted infections in Nigeria. The situation is much worse in those parts of the country where young women, are forced to marry at earlier ages, and have minimal access to modern family planning methods and formal education. The progression from early marriage to rebellion and prostitution is common. For girls sex quickly becomes a convenient way to have fun and make some extra income. The major factors fuelling the spread of HIV include sexual activities of adolescents and young adults polygamy and multiple sexual partners, illiteracy, ignorance, and deep-seated poverty. Low level of female enrollment in school, high drop-out rate, and early pregnancy and unsafe sexual practices due to ignorance contribute to the acquisition of HIV.

Conclusions. The dynamics of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria is driven by ignorance, poverty and disease. The north east zone is disadvantaged by its location; where it is externally bounded by countries crippled by conflicts and internally by states that have the highest HIV prevalence in the Country. HIV is a "social disease". It disrupts the fabrics of society through stigmatization of sufferers, as well as through years of education and of productivity lost. In the absence of an effective vaccine, education has been described as a "social vaccine" in the fight against the pandemic. Governments have to act in concert with non-governmental agencies to help this region of Nigeria and others attain at least the first six of the millennium development goals by the year 2015 to check this ugly trend.