



## Review Article

# Effectiveness of HIV/AIDS educational intervention in increasing knowledge, attitude and practices for primary school teachers in some part of Africa



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## ABSTRACT

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is virus that weakens the immune system of the body through destruction of the white blood cells. Whereas, AIDS term as; acquired immune deficiency syndrome is a disease due to the infection of HIV. Knowledge of health, and practices among teachers of primary school are scanty. Studies indicated that few teachers have heard or even became aware that HIV/AIDS is a viral infectious, and some of them lacked the knowledge about its mode of transmission with low attitudinal behaviours. Thus, this review paper discusses some health promotion measures and relevant information regarding, how the use of educational intervention in primary school teachers, could help in reducing the incidence cases of HIV/AIDS in Africa. We therefore recommend effective educational intervention programmes should be set for primary school teachers, in order that the teachers and the students could have a sound knowledge of health practices that will change their attitude which in turn reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission.

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## 1. Introduction

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is a worldwide public health problem that has been resulting in different type of feelings and scared responses in different people since its clinical diagnosis in the year 1981 [1]. In-fact, all over the World, HIV/AIDS poses a serious challenge to humanity. It has been taken the life of millions of people. It is estimated that at least 25 million people have died from AIDS since 1981 when the virus was first identified [2]. In total, over 100 million people have been infected by HIV, while over 35.0 million people are currently living with the disease [3].

Considering the current estimates from (UNAIDS, 2013 [3]), 35.0 million are presently living with HIV, which is higher up from 29.8 in 2001. Another report indicated that, the world prevalence rate of HIV AIDS (the percentage of people aged 15–49) has levelled

since 2001 and was 0.8% in 2013. In the overall prevalence rate, women represent half of adults living with HIV Worldwide. The overall death in the year 2013 was 1.5 million people, which shows 35% decrease since 2005. Also, there were 3.2 million children living with HIV; with new HIV infection of 240,000, while 190,000 AIDS death was reported globally in 2013. Approximately, the new HIV infection was 33% among young people aged 15–24. The decrease in the global HIV/AIDS death was associated to antiretroviral treatment (ART) scale-up [4].

The disease acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) is caused by HIV (human immune-deficiency virus) which is transmitted through direct contact of mucous membrane or the blood stream with a bodily fluid containing HIV such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid, pre-seminal fluid and breast milk [5]. AIDS makes its victim highly vulnerable to life threatening infections such as tuberculosis (TB) and certain types of cancer. The disease can be contracted through sexual intercourse with infected person, or through blood transfusion and using contaminated sharp instruments to cut the body, prenatal transmission from an infected mother to her child, including untreated sexually transmitted diseases, etc. [2].

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The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is very high in Sub-Saharan Africa compared to other regions of the World. According to Kadiri et al. [6], the region accounts for two-thirds (67%) of all people living with HIV and for nearly three-quarters (72%) of AIDS-related deaths in 2008. Also, an estimated 1.9 million were newly infected with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2008 bringing to 22.4 million the number of people living with the disease [7]. It is pertinent to note that more than 60% of people living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa are women, hence it is the leading cause of premature deaths in Africa especially among reproductive young people and women [8]. However, more worrisome is the dimension of mother-to-child-transmission of the disease, which is on the increase in the region. Nigerian Daily Trust (February, 2010 [9]) reported that, Nigeria has the highest number of newborn babies with HIV/AIDS in the World.

In Nigeria, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS has been battled with since its detection in 1986 [6]. After India and South Africa, Nigeria is third to the countries mostly affected by HIV/AIDS pandemic with about 10% of the estimated cases in the global World [10]. The disease is seriously threatening almost every sphere of life of people across the nation (physically, mentally, socially, politically, economically, emotionally, morally and spiritually) posing a greater and serious public health with socio-economic implications [11]. Since its discovery in Nigeria, the number of infected people continuously increasing from 1.8% in 1991 to 5.8% in 2001 before slightly dropped to 5.0% in 2003. The prevalence was 4.4% in 2005 and later increased to 4.5% in 2008; more so, a prevalence of about 4.5% was reported among youths between the ages of 15 and 29 years; 4.1% in 2010; 3.4% in 2012 (WHO, 2014 [12]).

Based on the above statistics, evidences have shown that HIV/AIDS is at epidemic proportion in Nigeria and could become the leading cause of morbidity and mortality among people, especially in the most reproductive ages of 15–49. In-fact, the impact of this disease have been putting a serious dent in the nation's progress and the general development, including serious devastation in almost all facets of the society. Primary education is also one of the major area susceptible to such devastation [13].

Generally, primary education forms the core foundation of a formal educational take-off for developing literacy and progressive society. But very unfortunate, the HIV epidemic threatens to aggravate the already shaky challenges facing primary education in Nigeria. Among the major impacts of HIV/AIDS is the affection of factors that influence both the supply and demands for education. The continuous increase of morbidity and mortality rates among the working-age population including teachers, school administrators, management staff (both skilled and non-skilled staff) and etc., poised a great danger to the nation's educational system. Nigeria is regarded as home to more people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) than any other country in the World except South Africa and India [14]. In addition, it was reported by Federal Ministry of Health that, at the end of 2003 between 3.2 and 3.6 million Nigerians were estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS [15]. Also, in 2005 the sentry survey reported that, about 2.9 million Nigerians were living with HIV/AIDS with a national adult prevalence rate of 4.4% [16].

Unlike in any other profession, the disruptive aspects of HIV/AIDS on the supply and demand for education have immediate negative and long-term effects with serious consequences as regard quantity and quality of education that will be very difficult to re-coup in the country. For example, the absence of a classroom teacher for a day (either due to his sickness or having a sick relative) directly translate into a loss of knowledge intake for the learners, especially in those schools where the allocation is said to be teacher per class (teaching all subjects in a particular class). Similarly, the increased dropout or absent of school children affected by HIV/AIDS negatively affected either the school

enrolment or caused absenteeism. These consequences will surely debar the school children from attaining the functional numeracy and literacy skills necessary for school success.

Base on the above literature search, no study that sought out to evaluate the important for schoolteachers to be equipped with psychological, and other pedagogical theories in achieving the goals of health promotion. The primary school teachers should have the cognitive preparations and professional interest in ensuring considerable success in attaining the central objectives of health promotion. Therefore, this review draws on HIV/AIDS, educational intervention, knowledge, attitude and practices of primary school teachers. We explore the key areas that require critical study, and proper intervention that will enable primary school teachers understand the concept of education in promoting health to the pupils.

## 2. Concepts

### 2.1. Definition of HIV

Many authorities have defined HIV/AIDS in various ways. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is regarded as a virus that makes the immune system of the body to become weak by destroying a certain kind of blood cells such as; CD4, T-Cells or Helper T-Cells, which are necessary to have normal immune system [17]. HIV enters the human body as an unidentified monster, established in the body as a chameleon; destroys the natural immunity (the white blood cells) as a bulldozer which destroys a building [18]. HIV manifests itself as AIDS (full-blown), bringing out some or all the features that leave no one in doubt of the type of infection [2].

May et al. [26] further explained HIV as an acronym for the human immunodeficiency virus that is classified as retrovirus, which replicate within a host cell (helper T-Cells) and comprised part of the body's immune system. Principal amongst these cells are CD4 Cells, which are effective indicators to the body's immune resistances. Therefore, by gradually depleting the CD4 Cells, HIV is capable of gaining more chance of weakens the body immune response thereby leaving it defenceless to infections it could otherwise destroy. Upon initial infection, HIV duplicates strongly infecting and destroying a substantial number of CD4 Cells; and finally leaving the body exposed to potentially life-threatening illnesses [19].

### 2.2. Definition of AIDS

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) on the other hand, is defined as a disease of the immune system due to infection with HIV. AIDS is a disease which is capable of destroying completely the power (immunity) of our body to withstand even minor infections [20]. As a result of this, a common condition of ill health like diarrhoea can kill an AIDS victim instantly. Also, AIDS is regarded as an opportunistic infections which attack the body when the immune system is so weak, which is caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) [21]. AIDS is an infection that manifest in the body when the causative agent (i.e. HIV) human immunodeficiency virus gain entry into the human body, thereby invading the defence system and destroying the white blood cells. The destructions of the blood soldier make the HIV/AIDS victim to lose ability to fight off a variety of infections that could have been destroyed by the soldier cells [22].

Zwahlen and Egger [23] further defined the word 'AIDS' as the acronym for acquired immune deficiency syndrome, which is not a disease but rather the stage of HIV infection. It is regarded as a stage where the body immune system is rigorously compromised, thereby allowing for a variety of opportunistic infections to take

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