

The Effect of Sociocultural Factors on HIV/AIDS Prevalence amongst Adolescents and Youths in Niger State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This review of the article titled "The effect of sociocultural factors on HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst adolescents and youths in Niger State, Nigeria", authored by Otojareri Kohwo started with introduction and then was focused on aspects such as literature review, structure, critique, authority, currency, accuracy, relevance, objectivity and stability. Furthermore, appraisal of tables, recent advances related to the topic, credibility and accessibility. The objective of the original article was "to examine the effect of socio-cultural factors on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst adolescent and youths attending the antiretroviral clinics of four general hospitals in Niger State, Nigeria." HIV/AIDS remains a public health problem in Nigeria where its prevalence does not decline among young adolescents despite policies in place, due to several socio-cultural factors. Hence the interest such research topic. The author employed a hospital base descriptive study in selected hospitals targeting young and adolescent population with positive HIV statuses. Sampling technic used was "multistage" Structured questionnaire was administered, analysis was performed and all ethical issues were addressed. Overall, this was a less objectively written article, with some relative credibility. However, the article has contributed but slightly to de body of knowledge on the topic especially this area of Nigeria. The great weakness in this article is that it would require significant improvement in its methodology. However, the article is very accessible, with a very current public health topic and relevant for students. Further research with very adapted methodology could be very interesting.

Keywords: Review, HIV/AIDS, adolescents and youth, sociocultural factors.

Introduction

This article critically reviewed the research article entitle "The effect of sociocultural factors on HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst adolescents and youths in Niger State, Nigeria" which was authored by Otojareri Kohwo Anthony and published in *Texila International Journal of Public Health*. The article tackled a major public health issue in Africa. Indeed, despite the progress made in recent years on HIV/AIDS in the world, leading to the general decline of its prevalence, the threat remains a concern in sub-Saharan Africa where is recorded 68% of global HIV prevalence, which has higher impact on women, young and adolescents people (WHO, 2011). But, at the end, we were a little disappointed by its findings of the article

because as it was supposed to identified sociocultural factors which influence the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among adolescents and youth in a state in Nigeria, it finally came to the conclusion that "... socio-cultural factors were found not to have influence on HIV/AIDS prevalence".

The review started with an introduction, followed by a literature review related to the topic as well as the article summary. Then, analysis of the effectiveness of the article's structure was made to explore the information's arrangement of the article to find its accessibility. In addition, the review faced the critique of the article, appraising its authority, currency, accuracy, relevance, objectivity and stability. There was also table's analysis and in

addition, the recent advances related to the topic before ending by assessing the credibility as well as the accessibility of the article.

Review of Literature

The discovery of HIV/AIDS in 1985 was followed by a spread of the disease that then became a pandemic. Fortunately, thanks to the control efforts of national AIDS programs with the support of various partners, the number of new infections globally fell by 39%, while at the same time deaths from HIV fell by a third between 2000 and 2016 (WHO, 2017). However, HIV/AIDS remains a public health problem in the world and especially in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 68% of the global HIV prevalence (WHO, 2011). Worse women and especially young people who bear the future of this continent remain a critical target. In fact, the WHO (nd) estimates that 40% of all new HIV infections in 2009 were young people aged 15 to 24, in addition to the fact that the large numbers of children born infected, most of them will become adolescents and young a because of their better monitoring today. In addition, there are an estimated 11.8 million young people aged 15-24 living with HIV worldwide; worse, 6000 young people of the same age group contract HIV every 24 hours (UNAIDS, 2002). Africa is therefore a region that needs to intensify efforts to prevent new infections in order to reverse the current prevalence curve in the continent. Many studies agree that several factors, specifically the sociocultural factors more specific to Africa, contribute significantly to explain this prevalence, which remains relatively high in sub-Sahara Africa, especially among adolescents and young people. These include drug use, insufficient knowledge about the disease (Frank, 2017), women's poverty that promotes prostitution, certain cultural practices such as polygamy and levirate, early marriage (Magrama, 2008; 2010, Kinsakieno, 2012), religion, consumption of alcohol and certain drugs, sexual mutilation and circumcision (Mahamoud et al., 2009), lack of access to conventional health services (WHO, nd; Frank, 2017), the precociousness of sexual relations (WHO, nd). The level of education and insufficient use of condoms (Ouedraogo, 2007). This list is not exhaustive and it is always interesting in a particular context such as that of

Nigeria to conduct studies aimed to identify factors associated with the rise in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among young people and adolescents to better understand the best prevention of this pandemic that seems to have made its home in the African youth. Unfortunately, this study could not identify any of socio-cultural factor. Is it a methodological problem or the choice of variables tested?

Article summary

The objective of the article under review was “to examine the effect of socio-cultural factors on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS amongst adolescent and youths attending the antiretroviral clinics of four general hospitals in Niger State, Nigeria”. The study was a hospital-based descriptive study which was conducted as stated above in four general hospitals in these states which population in 2006 were estimated at 2.950 249 inhabitants. The target population of the study was youth and adolescents aged (11-25) years, with HIV statues positive. The sample technique used was a “multistage random sampling technique” with at the first stage: the “random selection” of four general hospitals among others in the State. The second stage random selection of participants inside each selected hospital. Questionnaire used was structured to fit with study objectives and was administered by 5 trained personnel including the author. Data collected were analyzed using statistical descriptive and inferential analysis. All the ethical considerations relating to such a study were addressed. After all, it came to the conclusion that no association was found between any sociocultural factors and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS among the youth and adolescent in Niger State, Nigeria. However, they found “more awareness programs about HIV/AIDS should be carried out among adolescent and youths. Government and Nongovernmental organization should partner with the community, faith-based organization, schools to implement these findings”

Article structure

The title of the article, its author, grade, affiliation and E-mail were presented followed by an abstract which briefly introduced the problem statement and the objective of the study, a brief methodology, result and a brief conclusion. Thus, the abstract gave us a succinct

summary of the research study in term of its objectives and results. Following the abstract was the body of the article with its various sections as recommended in such report. Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussion (IMRAD) and finally a brief conclusion and recommendations; this structuring thus, facilitates the reading and the retrieval of the key information of the document. However, no conflict of interest declaration was made by the author nor any acknowledgment. The introduction well referenced according to literature review, clearly mentioned the background of the study, the statement of the problem and stating the burden of HIV/AIDS and some of sociocultural factors that may influence its prevalence among youth and adolescents in different localities and specifically in Africa and then, stating the objective of the research study. The methods section outlined the study location with brief description of the area of study; the study population was analyzed separated from sample size determination and the sampling technique, which was surprising for us. The study design stated a descriptive and analytical study; the instrument for data collection, data analysis and ethical consideration; the measurements, and techniques of data analysis that was used. The formula for sample size was stated according to the reference, but was it still necessary to multiply the number of participants obtained by calculation by 4? For us, no (Pourhoseingholi *et al.*, 2013). Otherwise, the sampling technique claimed to be random was not so in the choice of health facilities (only 4 general hospitals that differ from other hospitals, so the choice was reasoned) or in the choice of individuals (there was no possibility to have a sampling frame to assert random subject selection (Elfil *et al.*; 2016) The limitation of the method used was not acknowledged. The result section in our view did not show the salient findings as aligned to the objective of the study. Even though the tables were used to facilitate a clear understanding of the results, these were in the results sections rather than after references as recommended by some journals editors. Moving further, discussion section addressed the area of focus in the research and enriched with comparisons from citations of previous studies which were clearly referenced, and the limitations to guide future research on the topic.

Finally, the conclusion on which was short, lacking depth because no association was found between sociocultural factor and HIV/AIDS prevalence among adolescents and youth.

Article critique

Authority

The Texila International Journal of Public Health (TIJPH) is one few Electronical Journal of the Texila American University, specialized in Public Health. It is one of the leading peer reviewed journals of high repute in Caribbean, South American and Asian area where its reputation is well established. TIJPH is published under the supervision of experts and professors of the Texila American University (TAU) and its partner universities and research institutes. It is a reputable international University listed in WHO book of medical schools and who collaborates with other universities such as University of Central Nicaragua among others. The journal is indexed with 20 popular indexing services and this indexation is also considered as reflection of its great quality. The article was searched using the link in the Moodle (<https://dop.tauedu.org/my/>), section "E-Journal". It can also be finding in Google or on the journal website (<http://www.texilajournal.com>). It is open access to all the research scholars. We can give some credit to its author especially as his profile mentioned that he holds a PhD in Public Health from TAU; even though there is no other information on its background in term of professional's status, research publications and teaching.

Accuracy

In the study, neither the study period nor the data collection periods were specified. But when we look at the list of references, we observe that the most recent year is 2013 for an article published in 2017. It can therefore be said that the documents consulted for both the literature review and the other methodological aspects as well. that the discussion of the research work are relatively recent and come from credible sources although we have not found in the reference list, the following authors yet cited in the text: Earl, 1995; CDCHIV / AIDs Annual Report, 2008; Roselinnnes, 2006; Sengendo and Sekatawa, 1999; Velayati et al., 2007; Asiimwe et al., 2003; UNICEF, 2013 and NACA, 2013.

However, the fact that the TIJPH has a review committee that ensures that the journal's own publications rules are respected before it is accepted for publication is also a guarantee of credibility that should not be neglected. Overall, the accuracy of the work is therefore quite optimal.

Currency

There is no information in the TIJPH, mentioning the date when the article published in 2017 was received and accepted. Secondly, in the methodology of the article, the date or the period of the study was not mentioned anywhere. For these reasons, it is difficult to better assess the currency of the research even though we can find in the reference list, some articles published in 2013. Moreover, the references cited in the body of the text of the article were not in their majority up to date with range between 1990 and 2013, with most of them in 2005 and 2007. In the context of the foregoing, although the article deals with a very current health problem, it usually raises a problem because of the numerous references (08 in total) in the text not listed in the reference list.

Relevance

The TIJPH is for students, academicians; health professionals and others organizations with interest in issues regarding the health, especially public health in the world but mainly in Caribbean, Asian, South American and increasingly Africans. It is highly credible in the context of the above-listed groups. The article was probably written to enlighten Students, academicians, researchers, organizations (national or international) and policy makers interested in the management and control of HIV/AIDS among Youth and adolescent in Africa and specifically in Nigeria state. It is very relevant to above groups of people and more especially to students of TAU and others affiliated institutions.

Objectivity

The objectivity of the information given in this article is more or less true despite many questions that may be explained by the different conceptions that the author and we can have at the level of the research approach. As epidemiologists, our approach in conducting cross-sectional studies like this one with an

analytical aim (identification of the determinants), we think that in studies such as "The Effect of Sociocultural Factors on HIV / AIDS Prevalence Adolescents and Youths in Niger State, Nigeria ", when choosing a quantitative methodology, in order to maintain relative reliability, both a population of HIV-positive young people and adolescents and a population of negative HIV-negative should be recruited. So, the Odds of exposure for HIV + and HIV- would then be measured for each socio-cultural factor sought, the Odds Ratio (OR) would be calculated or at least the Chi-square tests used to identify them as it was a case in some studies (Ouedraogo, 2007, Magrama, 2008 and Takou, 2010). However, in this study, as we can be seen from the results, all analyzes done were uni-varied (frequency analyzes) without any cross-tabulation that could allow comparisons. From where we wonder where are the "analyzes of variance" evoked in the methodology by the author intervened in the results which were finally presented to us. In our view, the objective clearly stated at the beginning can only be considered as partially or not at all linked to the results of the study because of certain aspects of the methodology that we continue to question. The target population was clearly defined (young people and adolescents between the ages of 11 and 25. This is in line with WHO references). But the calculation of the total number retained seemed to us to be inappropriate as the so-called random sampling to several degrees whereas we observed a sampling by reasoned choice at first (choice of the general hospitals in priority because of their capacities) and in a second step a convenience sampling (recruitment of target persons available in selected hospitals). According to the author, "Data processing and analysis were done using descriptive and inferential statistics" but we could not observe in the results presented elements of inferential statistics. The references used to support research decisions in the appropriate sections were more or less up-to-date, although many of them were not listed at the end of the research list of reference.

Stability

The article under review was published in TIJPH, a Texila University journal of Public Health mainly for students, academicians,

researchers, health professional and secondary, policy maker and stakeholders in the public health area could also have access to its information's for decisions.

Analysis of table

The Results section of this article included 14 tables all with single entry. All were derived from frequency analyzes without any possibility to compare the prevalence of the main variable of research (which was not measured) according to the sociological factors retained by the author (consumption of alcohol and its effects on sexual relations pornography and its effects on sexual relations, belonging to a sectarian group encouraging certain dangerous sexual practices, the practice of blood pacts, participation in ceremonies during which syringes are exchanged between members). All the titles of tables were stated but not in conformity with norms. Indeed, the title of a table should be self-understanding: The problem (what?), the place of the study (Where?) and the date or (when?). Moreover, even though data presented inside were comprehensible, their designs did non-respected norms and recommendations (Tuncel & Atan, 2013).

Recent advances related to the topic

Young people aged 15 to 24 and adolescents accounted for more than 40% of all new HIV infections in 2009. In addition, infants infected at birth, will more and more become adolescent and young and will increase the HIV seropositivity figure. WHO estimates that there are more than five million young people and adolescents living with HIV worldwide (WHO, nd). The situation is therefore worrying and deserves special attention, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, which accounts for 68% of the global HIV prevalence (WHO, 2011).

Studies agree that factors such as education as well as beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, values, norms, mores, behaviors, practices are all traditional socio-cultural factors that can to determine the prevalence of diseases this scourge emerges in modern times in the world, particularly among young people and adolescents (WHO, 2011, Magrama, 2008 and Takou, 2010). In addition, Magrama (2008) and Takou (2010). They also clearly identified factors such as polygamy and conjugal instability, inherited inheritance of levirate,

purification rites and female genital mutilation as factors associated with the high prevalence of HIV in some African countries. WHO (2011) also considers that socio-cultural factors such as drug use, homosexual sex, precarious situations such as prisoners and sex workers, and factors related to the accessibility of health care to people may have depending on the case of positive or negative influences on the evolution of HIV / AIDS in Africa. So, WHO concluded that it is essential to remove all these structural barriers to facilitate the use of health services and to ensure that national HIV responses are based on a coherent and equitable approach. (WHO, 2011). This is especially true as adolescents and young adults generally feel less affected by this disease. In fact, 24% of 15-25-year olds said they were not afraid of AIDS in 2016, and among 15-17-year olds, this number reached 30%. 30% of 15-24-year olds interviewed have distorted representations of the disease and its modes of transmission (Frank, 2017). On the other hand, particularly in Africa, traditional practices such as FGM and female genital mutilation, male circumcision, prostitution, early marriage (Umulisa, 2013) can also lead to HIV/AIDS infection during and after Ablation to the extent that there is sexual intercourse prior to healing the wound with a contaminated individual. Other socio-cultural factors associated with the development of HIV/AIDS in Africa such as lifestyles (unoccupied women), ethnicity and religion, alcohol consumption and its effects on sexual relations; pornography and its effects on sexual relations; belonging to a sectarian group encouraging certain dangerous sexual practices; the practice of blood pacts; participation in ceremonies where syringes are exchanged between members has been widely documented (Ognaligui, 2013). All this shows the interest and urgency of studies of this kind to better address this problem that is ravaging the young populations of the African continent in particular.

Conclusion

This article review assessed, appraised and criticized the structure, content, strengths and weaknesses of the study entitled "The effect of sociocultural factors on HIV/AIDS prevalence amongst adolescents and youths in Niger State, Nigeria". Overall, this was in our point of view a

less objectively written article, with some relative credibility in its ramifications and has contributed slightly to the body of knowledge on the topic especially in this part of the world because finally no cultural factor was found yet it was the main objective of research. The greatest weakness of this article is that it would require a significant improvement in its methodology, table's presentation in the results section and references, especially in the area of calculating sample size, sampling technique and data analysis and statistics. The challenge of HIV/AIDS among youth and adolescents and the effect of sociocultural factors on its prevalence in African countries are enormous and require urgent intervention to forestall the rising trend of these disease conditions and its attendant complications in our society. There is an urgent need maintain attention on HIV/AIDS in Africa even if the disease is generally decreasing in the world to save millions of lives. Health education and mass communication on all aspects of prevention of diseases, early screening and early treatment of these conditions should be reinforced health systems in Africa especially in Nigeria. The article is very accessible, with a very current public health topic and relevant for students. Further research with very adapted methodology could be very interesting.

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