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School-based HIV/AIDS risk-reduction intervention programmes among adolescents in Orlu Senatorial Zone, Imo State, Nigeria

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Introduction: Human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) constitute a major public health challenge in Imo State of Nigeria and adolescents are increasingly becoming vulnerable. It is necessary to target adolescents with risk-reduction educational interventions because they can be effectively reached through schools. However, effective interventions for doing this are limited in Nigeria. This study was, therefore, conducted to investigate the relative effectiveness of class-room instruction (CI) and drama (DR) on HIV/AIDS knowledge and risk-reduction practices among adolescents in Orlu Senatorial Zone.

Materials & Method: A quasi-experimental design was adopted which involved 165 students from three randomly selected co-educational secondary schools assigned to two experimental groups (CI and DR) and control. Baseline data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire which included 29-point knowledge and 27-point risk reduction practices scales. Knowledge scores <15 and ≥ 15 were classified as poor and good respectively while risk reduction practices scores <13 and ≥ 13 were categorised as positive and negative respectively. Results were used to design interventions that were implemented for 8 weeks. Mid-term and follow-up evaluations were conducted using the same instrument. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, t-test and ANOVA at $p=0.05$.

Result: Ages of the respondents in CI, DR and control groups were 13.4 ± 1.2 , 13.9 ± 1.5 and 13.8 ± 1.2 years respectively. Knowledge scores on HIV/AIDS at baseline were 20.5 ± 2.7 , 20.4 ± 2.6 and 21.1 ± 2.7 for CI, DR and control groups respectively. These increased significantly to 22.7 ± 2.7 , 22.6 ± 1.8 and 21.2 ± 0.3 at mid-term among CI, DR and control, respectively. At follow-up, scores among CI and DR increased significantly to 23.9 ± 1.8 and 24.5 ± 1.4 respectively while the control's score dropped to 20.0 ± 2.8 . HIV risk reduction practice among the respondents in CI, DR and control at baseline were 18.5 ± 4.6 , 19.8 ± 5.8 and 17.0 ± 4.8 , at mid-term scores were 23.8 ± 3.4 , 23.6 ± 3.4 and 17.7 ± 5.1 , while scores at follow-up were 24.9 ± 2.6 , 26.7 ± 1.1 and 17.0 ± 5.3 respectively, indicating significant increase among the intervention arms than control.

Conclusion: Drama intervention yielded more positive outcomes in knowledge gained and risk-reduction practices than classroom instruction. Drama is therefore recommended for use as school-based HIV/AIDS risk-reduction intervention in Orlu Senatorial Zone, Imo State, Nigeria.

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