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We'll show you you're a woman: Nature of violence and discrimination against HIV positive women in Nigeria: The case of Abia State

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Introduction: Study examined the extent to which cultural obligations which discourage women from right to family resources encourage violence and discriminations against women especially HIV positive women.

Materials and method: Data collection instruments were questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview guides. A total sample of 98 HIV positive women in the network of people living positively in Abia State was studied. Using total sample was designed to facilitate inclusion of women from urban and rural areas so as to note extent to which each is allowed rights to resources. Five key informants were also interviewed to authenticate responses got from women. Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Results: Findings showed that HIV positive women faced extensive discrimination and violence in their daily lives. Majority of them 85 (86.7%) were denied rights to family resources. These women, especially widows complained of lack of money to procure ART and food items. As high as 79.6% of the women were aware of risks of unprotected sex, yet 54 (55%) of them practiced it. Common reason proffered was that sex attracted money for their upkeep.

Conclusion: The proportion of HIV positive women who had no access to family resources, suggest pervasive marginalization, violence, lack of care and support as well as a threat to HIV prevention in Nigeria. The fact that HIV positive women engaged in risky sexual behaviors calls for enlightenment seminars to reduce the trend. If this action persists, government's efforts to reduce HIV prevalence in Nigeria would yield no significant result unless government enacts policies to allow rights to inherit family resources so as to reduce the tendency of taking risks capable of fueling HIV infection.

Biography

Enwereji E E is a Professor and a lecturer in Department of Community Medicine, College of Medicine, Abia State University, Uturu, Abia State, Nigeria.

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