

## 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on **HIV/AIDS, STDs, & STIs**

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### **An evaluation of the counseling and support services for HIV discordant couples in Benue and Nasarawa states of Nigeria**

**Tormusa Daniel Orngu**  
Federal University Lafia, Nigeria

The emergence of new cases of HIV in Nigeria is extensively accounted for by HIV discordant couples. This paper therefore is focused on evaluating the nature of counseling and types of support services rendered to discordant couples in some parts of Benue and Nasarawa states of Nigeria. The study engaged 25 discordant couples and 10 positive couples through the services of the non-governmental organizations working in the area of HIV/AIDS with two major hospitals in these states. The study employed in-depth interview and questionnaire for data collection. Each of the couple was interviewed independently of one another at their places of convenience. Findings of the study show that in most cases of new infections of HIV, the negative partner of discordant couples stands a higher risk of being infected with the virus. Little or no attention is given to the negative partner by supporting agencies while all attention is given to the positive partner. Most Nigerian hospitals do not make provision for supporting the negative partner stay negative. 22/25 of the discordant couples were counseled on the use of condom only but none of them received any support services to help the negative partner or protect their mutual health. The study recommends more counseling services to discordant couple; more awareness on stigma which sometimes lead to divorce; more enlightenment to couples to discourage their strong belief in metaphysical manipulation of HIV which makes them feel immune to infection; and the full support to hospitals for the implementation of antiretroviral therapy (ART) for treatment and prevention in serodiscordant couples as recommended by WHO.

[danieltormusa@gmail.com](mailto:danieltormusa@gmail.com)