HIV/AIDS Risk for Young Female Petty Traders at Car Parks

Yahya Muhammed Bah

University of The Gambia, School of Arts and Sciences, Brikama Campus, The Gambia, West Africa
*Corresponding author: yahyamuhammed@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

Though the HVI/AIDS prevalence rate in The Gambia is one of the lowest in the sub-region, the disease and its associated effects has always been a concern both to the government, non-governmental organizations, professionals, families, communities, development partners, etc. Over the decade a number of studies have been conducted in the areas of its mode of transmission, prevention, impacts, etc. However, there is none on the disease and the mobile population. The young female petty traders in the car parks are assumed to be at high risk of infection due to numerous factors including their contact with highly mobile populations. The purpose of this study was to examine their risk of infection by long-distance drivers. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, only twenty were willing to participate. The study was mainly centered on six fundamental areas namely; level of knowledge of the disease, perception toward the disease, level of knowledge of the causes and modes of transmission of the disease, level of knowledge of the preventive methods, level of knowledge of the disease management and treatment methods, and petty traders relationship with long-distance drivers. Because of limited resources and participants' reluctance to participate during first contact, the study took approximately seven months plus. Well-structured questionnaires were used to collect the data from the participants in three key car parks. The data was presented and analyzed using tables and percentage. The results among others revealed that there is high level of awareness of the disease. However, there is a mixed attitude toward the disease, the most worrisome being some participants seeing it as a punishment from God to the victims. Despite the majority being concern about being positive, they disassociated themselves with the seeking of medical treatment in case of being infected because of the fear of stigma and exclusion. The issue of herbalist being able to treat the disease was highlighted. Intimate relationships which include visitations exist between the young girls and long-distance drivers.

Keywords: *petty traders, long-distance drivers, HIV/AIDS, risk, long-distance*