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Disabled persons and HIV/AIDS prevention: A case study of deaf and leprosy persons in Nigeria.

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Abstract

Objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate factors and/or conditions that influence HIV/AIDS prevention to leprosy and/or deaf patients in leprosy settlements. Despite the policy that HIV and AIDS prevention should be extended to every individual irrespective of health or social status, yet the extent to which disabled persons benefi from such services in Nigeria remains unknown.

Including disabled persons in health prevention programmes is a major challenge in developing countries including Nigeria . Whilst it is true that HIV response should include disabled persons, Governments' focus on able-bodied can over-simplify analysis that reduction of HIV prevalence among disabled is not effectively addressed. One may ask, are the disabled persons in leprosy settlements benefiting from health care programmes including HIV/AIDS prevention ?

Methods

Total sample of 227 inmates and 34 Health Care Workers were studied in three purposively selected settlements. Two intervention concepts, participatory reservation approach (PRA) and planned action (PLA) were utilized in the study. The concepts enabled the researcher to examine the factors that influenced provision of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes to inmates in settlements. Data collection instruments were questionnaire and focus group discussion for inmates and interview guides for Health Workers. Data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively with the help of Stat Pac Gold package.

Results:

Findings showed no reproductive health and/or HIV prevention programmes in settlements. Lack of Governments commitment to fund health programmes and empower Health Workers through training and re-training, as well as the rejection, isolation, discrimination, stigmatization and others on the inmates in the settlements discouraged HIV/AIDS prevention in settlements. There was poor knowledge of mode of transmission of HIV/AIDS among inmates. About 59 (53.6%) of inmates in Abia, and 60 (51.3**%)** in Oyo were not interested in voluntary counseling, testing and/or sex education for fear of increased sexual immorality. Finding showed that inmates were at risk of unprotected sex. About 99(43.6%) in Oyo and 88 (38.8%) in Abia State, especially single inmates cohabited with opposite sexes to have babies in Settlements (p.003).

Conclusion:

Number of inmates that had babies in settlements, justifies providing reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes including sex education for a more realistic reduction of HIV/AIDS prevalence among disabled in Nigeria.

Key words: leprosy, deafness, HIV/AIDS, family planning, and Nigeria