



HIV Risk Perception and Condom Use among Market People

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ABSTRACT

Aim:

In Nigeria, about 3.11 million people are estimated to be living with HIV by the end of 2010, thereby making about 9% of the global HIV burden. Studies in Sub-Saharan African countries have considered perceived risk as a predictor of such risk behaviours as using condoms inconsistently or having multiple sex partners. The present study aimed at addressing market peoples' HIV/AIDS risk perception, sexual behaviour and condom use in order to assess the needs for sex education.

Method:

The study was done through the administration of pretested self-administered questionnaire comprising four sections to 393 market men and women.

Results:

Majority of the respondents were females (76.3%) with the major age group being ages 20-39 years (67.4%) and those who had tertiary education was 50.4%. HIV/AIDS awareness level was 98.2%. Although 46.2% of the males and 10% of females had more than one sexual partner 51.2% and 56.7% respectively used condom always. Fear of contracting HIV (50.6%) was their main reason for using condom.

Conclusion:

Condom use in this group of people was on the average and HIV risk perception can be said to be encouraging especially among the female respondents. Despite this there is still need for more intensive intervention and educational programmes that focus on HIV/AIDS risks associated with having multiple sexual partners and condom use.

KEY WORDS: HIV/AIDS, Risk Perception, Condom, Market People.

INTRODUCTION

Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimated 33.4 million people living with HIV globally in 2008 [1] and in Nigeria about 3.11 million people are estimated to be living with HIV by the end of 2010, thereby making about 9% of the global HIV burden [2]. The UNAIDS (2004) reported that young people and increasingly girls, account for most cases of new HIV/AIDS infections in Nigeria [3].

The relationship between perception of risk and sexual behavior is complex and poorly understood. Studies conducted in different cultures have associated HIV risk perception with a wide range of variables: number of sexual partners, knowledge of sexual partners' past sexual behavior, fear of AIDS, shame associated with having AIDS, community perception of AIDS risk,

knowing someone with AIDS, discussing AIDS at home, closeness of parent-child relationships and religious affiliation [4]. In Sub-Saharan Africa, sociocultural norms and practices are major determinants of sexual risk-taking behaviour [5]. Despite high HIV prevalence and high rates of sexual risk behaviours in Sub-Saharan African countries, young people in these countries often perceive themselves as being at low risk of HIV infection [6-7]. One explanation for this is that youth may underestimate risks in general because of a feeling of invulnerability [4]. Some studies in Sub-Saharan African countries have considered perceived risk as a predictor of such risk behaviours as using condoms inconsistently or having multiple sex partners [8-9]. Individuals' knowledge of HIV transmission and accurate assessment of their own



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risk seem to be among the key factors in adoption of safer sexual practices [10] and personal risk perception has been found to be associated with increased condom use [11].

Despite the knowledge of the protection that condoms provides, its use is relatively low among the general population and among sexually active adolescents [12-13]. The 2003 Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey data showed that among men aged 15-19 and 20-24 years, the proportion reporting ever use of condoms was 9.8% and 30%, while among women in the same age groups the proportion was 6.5% and 14.8% respectively [14].

Low rates of condom use have been reported in many other studies [15-16] but in a study by Khaniya and Joshi [17], all the respondents replied that they were at risk of being infected if had unsafe sex and have multiple partners and also all of the them replied that they had used condom last time when they had sex with a client.

Understanding which factors predict the individual's perception of risk is therefore essential to designing effective intervention against this scourge. As such, the present study aimed at addressing market peoples' HIV/AIDS risk perception, sexual behaviour and condom use in order to assess the needs for sex education at their level of understanding.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study location

The study was carried out in two local government headquarters in Ogun State namely Sagamu and Ijebu-Ode local government area (LGAs). Two major markets and a shopping mall were used in Sagamu and two major markets in Ijebu-Ode. The markets were namely:

Olabisi-Onabanjo Market (Ijebu-Ode), Oke-Aje Market (Ijebu-Ode), Falawo Market (Sagamu), Sabo Market (Sagamu) and Ijokun Shopping mall and environs

Study population

A minimum sample size of 393 market men and women calculated through appropriate statistical method were enrolled for this study. The number was determined by a standard normal deviation set at 1.96 which corresponds to 95% confidence level and a margin of sampling error acceptable set at 5%.

Study design

This was a descriptive cross sectional study carried out amongst market women and men in Sagamu and Ijebu-Ode.

Research instrument

The research tool was pretested self-administered questionnaire comprising four sections namely; demographic characteristics, sexual behaviour and condom use. The instrument was assessed for clarity and comprehensiveness of content by pretesting it. Based on the feedback from the pretest and validity assessment, Some questions were also re-worded to eliminate ambiguous phrasing.

Procedure

A total of 415 questionnaires were administered to market men and women, 393 were correctly filled and retrieved. Before the questionnaires were filled, the purpose was explained to all of them. Pidgin and Yoruba languages were used in emphasizing the purpose to them as they were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. Consent was then sought and obtained from them before the administration of the questionnaires which were retrieved immediately after completion.

Inclusion Criteria:

Potential participants were market men and women who displayed their wares in these markets.

Exclusion criteria:

Those who came to buy from these market men and women and passers by.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed using SPSS package version 13.0. Descriptive analyses of frequencies and percentages were generated for all the variables except where specified.

RESULTS

A total of 415 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the market people but only 393 were correctly filled and retrieved.

Social demographic characteristics of respondents

From the results obtained, most of the respondents were females (76.3%). The major age group of respondents was ages 20-39 years (67.4%), (Table 1a).

The percentage of people who had tertiary education was 50.4% while 2.5% had no formal education. Above sixty percent (63.6%) of the respondents were from monogamous families while 62.8% of respondents live together with their spouses. Christianity (67.7%) constituted the major religion (Table 1b).

Sexual Behaviour and Condom use by respondents

Only 43(46.2%) of the males and 30(10%) of the female respondents confessed to having more than one sexual partner. Among respondents (males

and females) who indicated having multiple sexual partners, 51.2% and 56.7% respectively used condom always, 30.2% and 13.3% sometimes used it while 18.6% and 30.0% never used it at all. Generally, 28.8% always used condom when having sex, 33.6% sometimes used it and 4.1% did not respond to the question. The percentage of the respondents that believed in the safety of condom against HIV/AIDS was 63.1% while those who did not believe in its safety or did not know its safety was 30.3% and 6.6% respectively. Reasons for their condom use included: Fear of contracting HIV (50.6%), Fear of the unborn baby contracting HIV(6.6%), Contraceptive purpose (6.6%) while those who had never used it was 28.0% (Table 2).

Table 1a: Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Gender	Number of Respondents (n=393)	Percentage (%)
Male	93	23.7
Female	300	76.3
Total	393	100
Age (years)		
> 20	8	2.0
20 - 29	151	38.4
30-39	114	29.0
40-49	88	22.4
50 - 59	32	8.1
Total	393	100
Family		
Monogamous	250	63.6
Polygamous	143	36.4
Total	393	100
Religion		
Christian	266	67.7
Muslim	114	29.0
Traditional	4	1.0
No religion	4	1.0
No response	5	1.3
Total	393	100

DISCUSSION

From the results obtained, most of the respondents were females. This may be explained by the fact that females may seem to enjoy buying and selling than their male counterparts. Surprisingly, a large percentage of the market people had some significant level of education, with those who had tertiary education in the lead. Age, education, religion and urban residence have been found to be positively associated with condom use among young people as reported by in some studies [18-

19]. Surveys in Republic of Benin have recorded figures of condom use with a recent non-regular partner as low as 20% amongst men with no formal education, 18-19% in those with primary education and 39% in those with secondary education and above [20]. Apart from having a generally low level of use, young people are known to be inconsistent condom users and it is established that the risk for HIV is greater among those who are inconsistent users than among non-users [21-22]

Young people's sexual risk taking, largely results from a sense of invulnerability and lack of understanding of the consequences of their actions. Apart from being at increased risk, they also become potential sources of transmission.

Few people use condoms in steady relationships. In Nigeria, for example, 2% of respondents report always using condoms with a spouse or "concubine," compared to 33% for boyfriends and girlfriends and 67% for casual partners [23].

Fear of contacting HIV infection was the major reason by these respondents for adopting condom use during coitus. This is consistent with another study [17] but in contrast with some previous findings [15, 16]. Consistent with previous research [16, 24], majority of the respondents in our study perceived themselves as being at little or no risk of HIV infection. Correct assessment of one's risk could result in more than twice in condom use as compared with those who did not [25, 17].

Table 1b: Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Educational background	Number of Respondents (n=393)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	10	2.5
Primary school level	18	4.6
Secondary school level	167	42.5
Tertiary school level	198	50.4
Total	393	100
Marital Status		
Live together with husband/wife	247	62.8
Separated	20	5.1
Single parent	22	5.6
Widow	3	0.8
Single	101	25.7
Total	393	100

Table 2: Sexual Behaviour and condom use among respondents

Sexual behaviour	Number of respondents	
	Male (n=93)	Female (n=300)
More than one sexual partner	43 (46.2%)	30 (10%)
No multiple sexual partner	50 (53.8%)	270 (90.0%)
Total	93(100%)	300(100%)
Condom use with multiple sexual partners	Male (n=43)	Female (n=30)
Always	22 (51.2%)	17 (56.7%)
Sometimes	13 (30.2%)	4 (13.3%)
Never	8 (18.6%)	9 (30.0%)
Total	43(100%)	30(100%)
Condoms use generally	Frequency n=393	Percentage
During sex:		
Always	113	28.8%
Sometimes	132	33.6%
Never	132	33.5%
No response	16	4.1%
Total	393	100%
Belief in the safety of condoms against HIV/AIDS	n=393	
Yes	248	63.1%
No	119	30.3%
Don't know	26	6.6%
Reasons for condom use:	n=393	
Fear of contracting HIV	199	50.6%
Fear of unborn baby contracting HIV	26	6.6%
Contraception	58	14.8%
Never used condom	110	28.0%

CONCLUSION

In summary, HIV risk perception among this study group was low especially among the males but condom use was on the average. Considerable risk-taking sexual behaviour without condoms was found. Our study also revealed that engaging in unprotected sexual behaviour, one of the most commonly recognized ways of acquiring HIV/AIDS, did not predict the market people's heightened perception of risk for HIV/AIDS. Presuming one's self to be at low risk for HIV infection may encourage high-risk sexual behaviour like unprotected sex with multiple partners as seen in

this group. Although not all sex is risky sex but the probability of HIV infection is reduced if condoms are used consistently or if individuals have only one, uninfected sexual partner. While the respondents acknowledged that condom protects against pregnancy and disease, they refused to demonstrate a high usage in their sexual activities. In the absence of a cure for HIV and of major behavioural change in risky behaviours, it is important to focus on other factors that facilitate protective behaviours, one of which is education. HIV/AIDS education and prevention programmes should be targeted toward this study group.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS:

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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