



ACCESS TO HIV-TESTING SERVICES AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE: EVIDENCE TO STRENGTHEN MULTI-SECTORAL RESPONSE

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INTRODUCTION

Despite notable progress in HIV prevention and treatment, adolescents and young people (AYP) aged 15 to 24 years encounter specific obstacles when accessing these vital services.

HIV testing services penetration is still poor in a number of African nations, despite the expansion of testing facilities that followed the introduction of antiretroviral (ARV) programs throughout the continent. About 34.1% of new HIV infections in Nigeria occur among adolescents and young adults.

OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to provide evidence-based insights to strengthen the multi-sectoral response to HIV testing services (HTS) among AYP in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory qualitative study was conducted across four different geopolitical zones (North Central, South West, South East, and South South) in Nigeria. The study employed in-depth interviews as its primary research method, comprising a total of 10 participants, comprising 7 females and 3 males, ranging from 1 to 2 individuals (AYP) per campus who were purposively selected from six campuses (University of Jos, Abia State University, Babcock University, Plateau State University, Niger Delta University, and Michela and Cecilia Ibru University). To facilitate the interviews and gather data, telephone conversation and WhatsApp chats were utilized.

RESULT

Nigerian campuses offer inadequate HTS, and barriers such as limited awareness, insufficient access to HIV prevention commodities, and suboptimal services from campus clinics deter AYPs from accessing HTS. Furthermore, there is a lack of collaboration between tertiary institutions and other sectors in addressing this health challenge.

DISCUSSION

Strengthening multi-sectoral collaboration between tertiary institutions and relevant sectors can enhance the impact of HIV testing services among adolescent and young people. This requires a harmonized framework that prioritizes AYP on Nigerian campuses.

References:

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