



**FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SERVICES
UTILIZATION BY PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN AMINU KANO TEACHING
HOSPITAL**

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates factors that militate against information resources, sources and services utilization by people living with HIV/AIDS attending Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital. Qualitative research method using cross-sectional survey design approach was used to collect data from the respondents. The population of the study comprises all the HIV/AIDS patients in AKTH, simple random sampling was used. Out of 10,025 patients 370 patients were selected to serve as respondents of the study. Factors identified are as follows: Insufficient health information, Unfavorable attitude of the officers concern toward the provision of the needed information, Difficulty of getting right information, lack of organized information resources, and problems of Internet connectivity. Recommendations made include providing sufficient health information, right information materials and organizing the acquired information resources in order to provide easy accessibility to the resources by the users. There is also the need to provide good and effective Internet services together with the creation of the site through which the PLWHA could get access to the available information resources and services provided by the hospital.

KEYWORDS: *Information resources, Services utilization, People Living with HIV/AIDS, Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital*

Introduction

Human Immunodeficiency virus/Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) is one of the communicable diseases, which has no cure or vaccine. Bamise, Bamise & Adedegba (2009) opined that there is no vaccine or cure for HIV or AIDS; information, is therefore crucial for preventing the spread of the virus. Information plays an important role in health care provision; among the major obligations in the health care provision is prescription of drugs as well as other related treatment, counseling about a particular ailment to a patient, which requires adequate information. According to Auyo (2011), information is a basic and essential commodity required for any meaningful decision making, its provision and use is necessary for the development of individual, communities and larger society. As such, provision of relevant, current and useful information serves as the bedrock of effective health delivery.

People require information for different purposes in their daily tasks, such as to clear uncertainties and make very good decisions on whatever phenomena they are dealing with. For instance, people living with HIV/AIDS require information in order to know the consequences of the disease, how to take medication, how to relate with other people who do not have the disease and how to continue with their normal life with less complication. In relation to this, Hogan and Palmer (2005) states that information has been understood as a critical resource in the efforts to prevent transmission

of HIV, manage the complications that accompany the disease, and prolong People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) lives.

This statement testifies that, information, if rightly provided to the patients with HIV, could be utilized to manage their health condition, so as not to allow their present condition to deteriorate. In addition, the right information could surely educate PLWHA on how to prevent rampant transmission of the disease to other people in their community as well as other opportunistic infections that are associated with HIV/AIDS. Despite the importance of information to the PLWHA, little is known in the area of this study on the factors that militates against information resources and services utilization by People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

Statement of the Problem

Information serves as a pointer to man in his entire life endeavor for him to achieve his desired goals. Individual from different facet of life requires information be it an engineer, politician, health workers and even the patients. According to Zakari (2006) information can generally be conceived as an idea, experience or anything we come in contact physically or otherwise that adds to our existing knowledge and experiences. People Living with HIV/AIDS are not exclusive when talking about the influence of information. It is believed that, the availability of information will work as a guide to them in doing all what is possible to deface the negative consequences of the said virus (HIV/AIDS). In addition it could assist them in coping, curing and preventing themselves from further deterioration of their health condition and also to deter other opportunistic infection that are associated with HIV infections.

Unfortunately, people living with HIV/AIDS were confused with so many problems in their effort to make use of the information resources. According to Edewor (2012) the greatest constraints to access information by PLWHA are location of health care officers, inadequate fund, and distance of antiretroviral trail center as well as shortage of qualified personnel. Despite the fact that it has been established that information is imperative to people living with HIV/AIDS, in its treatment and the control of its widespread in Nigeria, little is known on the factors that militates against full utilization of information resources and services by PLWHA and how they could overcome this factors to be able to fully utilize the information resources and services. Therefore, the present study intends to investigate the factors that militate against information resources and services utilization by the PLWHA, among others. The findings of the study are expected to provide a framework for which PLWHA will implement in order to do away with the problems that hinders them in utilizing information resources and services in satisfying their information needs.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this research is to outline the factors militating against information resources utilization by HIV/AIDS patients in Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital in Kano State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the awareness of people living with HIV/AIDS with regard to information resources;
2. examine the utilization of information resources by the people living with HIV/AIDS
3. outline the factors hindering people living with HIV/AIDS in utilizing the information resources
4. propose possible ways for solving the challenges faced by People Living with HIV/AIDS in using the information resources.

Research Questions

The has the following research questions

1. What is the level of awareness of the people living with HIV/AIDS with regard to information resources?
2. What is the extent of utilization of information resources by people living with HIV/AIDS?
3. What are the factors that are hindering people living with HIV/AIDS in utilizing the information resources?



4. What are possible solutions the factors that are hindering people living with HIV/AIDS in utilizing the information resources?

Literature Review

There were various kinds of challenges that stand as a stumbling block to the PLWHA in the process of retrieving the information from different information sources and resources. However, in developed nations like Canada, misinformation is among the factors that hinder PLWHA to utilize information resources. Misinformation is the unintentional spread of inaccurate or false information, which usually travels within HIV information networks in rural areas and pass into the larger community (Venoit, Harris, Bella & Challacombe; 2011). Similarly, in the nationwide survey on information preferences and practice among PLWHA conducted by Hogan and Palmer (2005) reveals that, majority of their respondents indicated un-availability of information resources and hard to find the resources as well as hard to understand, not sure whether to trust the information resources, as their biggest barrier to utilize the information resources.

Furthermore, in a similar study conducted by Coraggio (2011) on information needs of women in developing countries, reported illiteracy as a barrier in fulfilling information need. According to him, illiteracy cannot be overcome when lack of accessibility to information as well as language barriers, exacerbate the situation. He also lamented that lack of materials on local language has contributed in one way or the other, which is more complex when dealing with regions where there is several ethnic groups with different language and dialects.

In a related development, a number of studies were conducted in Nigeria on the issue of HIV/AIDS and information which reported some aspects of factors militating against information resources utilization by PLWHA. For instance, Edewor (2012) reported in his study on access to information by PLWHA in Nigeria that, the greatest constraints to access information by PLWHA are location of health care officers, inadequate fund, and distance of Antiretroviral trail center as well as shortage of qualified personnel. Indeed, Edewor (2012) further stated stigmatization and discrimination, absence of HIV/AIDS data/information exchange network, ineffective communication strategies and information materials are not explicit enough.

Similarly, Arinola and Adekunjo (2012) in their study on analysis of HIV/AIDS information awareness and effectiveness among artisans in Ogbomoso, Oyo State in Nigeria reported that, lack of constant power supply constitutes a big challenge to use radio and television as information resources, difficulty in understanding the language of information resource, which is responsible for misconception with regard to usefulness of information; as well as insufficiency of rural campaigns and above all, illiteracy. In a similar development, Illo and Adeyemi (2010) who conducted a study on HIV/AIDS information awareness among market women, reported in their finding that, the respondents stated difficulty in understanding the language of the resources, bad timing of airing important events in both radio/television and lack of constant power supply to view/listen to programs regarding HIV/AIDS are among the several challenges faced by PLWHA in accessing the right information. In another development, Bamgbose, Oluwakemi and Ogunmodede (2014) stress that poverty, lack of sustainable information, stigmatization and non-involvement PLWHA in the provision of information as the major barriers in utilizing the information resources by the HIV/AIDS patients.

Furthermore, the findings of a study conducted by Stores, Gama and Tukur (2016) on Information Needs of People Living with HIV/AIDS in Kano State, stated some challenges faced by the PLWHA in sharing information which include low level of literacy, in ability to comprehend basic information on HIV, lack of internet and computer literacy, lack of awareness on where to access print media, lack of HIV information through traditional channels and in ability to patronize print media. They also suggested some possible solutions to the above mentioned challenges which include using the language that can be easily understood by the PLWHA, provision of more HIV information resources, educating the PLWHA in the use of print media as well as how to use computer/Internet. However, from the foregoing, it was clearly stated that none of the literatures has reported directly the challenges faced by People living with HIV/AIDS in utilizing the information resources in the area of

this study. Indeed, the researcher sees it necessary to investigate the factors/problems that militate against utilization of information resources by PLWHA.

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted quantitative research methodology so as to generate data from the respondents using survey research design. The design is suitable for the study because it is an aspect of social research which has to do with the attitude, behavior, believe and opinion of the people. According to Ifidon and Ifidon (2007), a survey research method gathers data from members of a population with respect to one or more variable.

The population of this study comprises the total number of the HIV/AIDS patients registered with Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital as at end of December 2012, numbering 10,025 patients receiving treatment (AKTH Annual Report, 2012). Out of the total number of these registered patients, 370 patients were randomly selected to serve as the respondents of the study. These patients are visiting the hospital for consultations and collection of their drugs from time to time. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. It was self-developed by the researcher with the help of other studies. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics to answer the research questions.

Findings and Discussions

Three hundred and seventy (370) copies of the questionnaire were distributed by the researcher to the selected respondents., out of which 283(76.5%) copies were duly completed and returned to the researcher, while 87(23.5%) were not returned.

Table 1:

Awareness	Frequency/ Percentage	Utilization	Frequency/ Percentage
Very much Aware	53(14.3%)	Very High Extent	48(12.9%)
Aware	220(59.5%)	Extent	112(30.3%)
Not Aware	97(26.2%)	Very Low Extent	210(56.8%)

Table 1 shows that more than half 220 (59.5%) of the respondents indicated their awareness with the information resources regarding HIV/AIDS. While 97(26.2%) respondents indicated that, they are not aware of the information resources. Only 53(14.3%) of the respondents revealed that they are very much aware of the information resources. The findings here indicate majority of the respondents are aware of the information resources in the hospital. With regard to utilization of the information resources, more than half of the respondents 210(56.8%) indicated very low utilization of the information resources. While 112(30.3%) of the respondents indicated utilizing information resources averagely. Only 48(12.9%) respondents indicated very high utilization of information resources. This finding indicated that, majority of the respondents were not using the information resources.

Table 2: Factors Militating Against Utilization of Information Resources by PLWHA

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Insufficient health information	66	23.3%
Lack of knowledge of the place where information needs can be satisfied	19	6.7%
Inability to read printed materials	17	6.0%
Unfavorable attitudes of the officers concern towards the provision of the needed information	36	12.7%
Lack of time with health workers to ask questions required	18	6.4%
Lack of organized information resources	28	9.9%
Difficulty in understanding the language of information resources	22	7.8%
Unreliability of health information on the Internet	18	6.4%
Difficulty in getting the right information	32	11.3%
Lack of computer literacy	6	2.1%

Problem of internet connectivity	20	7.1%
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Table 2 shows less than half of the respondents, 66(23.3%) indicates insufficient health information, 36(12.7%) unfavorable attitude of the officers concerned toward provision of the information needed by the respondents, 32(11.3%) difficulty in getting right information, 28(9.9%) lack of organized information resources, 22(7.8%) difficulty in understanding the language of the information resources, 20(7.1%) problem of internet connectivity, 19(6.7%) lack of knowledge of the place where information needs can be satisfied, 18(6.4%) lack of time with health workers to ask all question required and unreliable health information on the internet respectively. While 17 (6.0%) inability to read printed materials and only 6(2.1%) is the problem which PLWHA is facing while trying to utilize the information sources and resources.

The findings of the study reveals that majority of the respondents indicates insufficient health information and unfavorable attitude of the officers concerned toward provision of the needed information as the major challenge PLWHA usually face in satisfying their information needs . It is evident that this finding confirms the findings of Arinola and Adegunjo (2012), which reported lack of constant power supply as a challenge to use radio and television as information resources, difficulty in understanding the language of information resource, which is responsible for misconception with regard to usefulness of information; as well as insufficiency of rural campaigns and above all illiteracy. It also goes in line with findings of Illo and Adeyemi (2010), who conducted a study on HIV/AIDS information awareness among market women, reported in their finding that, the respondents stated difficulty in understanding the language of the resources, bad timing of airing important events in both radio and television as well as lack of constantan power supply are among the several factors that serves as a hindrance to PLWHA in accessing the right information.

Table 3: Proposed Solution to the Challenges

Solutions	Frequency	Percentage
Providing sufficient health information	66	23.4%
Making the video clip as well as audio clips on the issue of HIV/AIDS available to the patients	37	13.2%
Officers concern should portray favorable attitudes towards provision of the needed information	36	12.8%
Health workers should have time to answer the questions asked by the patients	40	14.2%
Providing organized information resources	29	10.3%
Providing information resources in common language understandable to the patients	22	7.8%
Providing reliability health information on the Internet	20	7.1%
Easy access to the right information	32	11.3%

Table 3 shows less than half of the respondent 66(23.4%) indicates providing sufficient health information as a major solution to the problems, 40(14.2%) Health workers should have time to answer the questions asked by the patients, 37(13.2%) Making the video clip as well as audio clips on the issue of HIV/AIDS available to the patients 36(12.8%) officers concern should portray favorable attitudes towards provision of the needed information, 32(11.3%) easy access to the right information, 29(9.9%) providing organized information resources, 22(7.8%) Providing information resources in common language understandable to the patients, while 20(7.1%) providing reliable health information on the Internet, The findings of the study reveals that majority of the respondent indicates providing sufficient health information is necessary and also, health workers should have enough time when attending to questions asked by the patients as well as making the video/audio clips on the issue of HIV/AIDS available to the patients as the solutions to the challenges faced by PLWHA in satisfying their information need. This shows that, the present findings goes in line with that of Stores, Gama & Tukur (2016) which states that using the language that can be easily understood by the PLWHA, provision of more HIV information resources, educating the PLWHA in the use of print media as well as how to use computer/Internet etc, as the possible solutions to the challenges faced by the PLWHA in sharing information.



Conclusion

From the foregoing, the findings shows that majority of the respondents were not using the information resources, this may not be un-connected with a number of factors that are hampering the full utilization of information resources and services by people living with HIV/AIDS. In addition this serves as a major setback in their effort to curtail the negative effect of the disease. Similarly, if these identified problems have looked into with a view to revamp their negative effect, could definitely help the main objective of eliminating the scourge of the disease.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:-

1. The stakeholders such as government, Non-governmental organization (NGOs), information agencies should provide sufficient health information with regard to HIV/AIDS.
2. An information officer who will be saddled with the responsibility of receiving information request and transmitting same to the people concern when the need arises should be provided.
3. A platform through which information could be transmitted via the video/audio clips on issues of HIV/AIDS should be made available to the patients.

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