



# Occupational Hazards among Healthcare Workers Caring for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Southern Nigeria.

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## Introduction:

The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Nigeria's healthcare system, coupled with health workforce shortage, has created substantial increase in the physical and emotional demands faced by healthcare workers. Throughout the epidemic, healthcare workers have been in the forefront of care and prevention activities, managing increased numbers of patients and assuming new responsibilities for HIV related Programmes. Health Providing high –quality care should not be hazardous to the healthcare workers providing care particularly for people living with HIV/AIDS. But if healthcare workers are not protected, how can the wellness of their patients be?

## Background:

Healthcare is an enviable profession in the Nigeria setting, but as applicable to other areas of human endeavor, the practitioners especially those who care for PLWHADS in southern Nigeria are exposed to many occupational hazards, some of which produce physical disabilities while others if care is not taken leads to life threatening disease like HIV/AIDS et.al. men and women in these jobs are responsible for providing high – quality healthcare, though their working environment such as hospitals, clinics and laboratories are recognized as hazardous. Its against this background, that this study seeks to assess the exposures and perceived health risk, occupational hazards among health care workers who provide care for people living with HIV/AIDS in southern Nigeria, using Eku Baptist Hospital as a Case study.

## Methods:

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected on 150 healthcare workers. The data use in this research study was derived from primary and secondary sources. And the study employed the survey design

## Results:

Table 1.1. Healthcare Exposure to Occupational Hazards

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	149	99.3
No	1	0.66
Total	150	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

The table above shows that 149(99.3%) of the total population agreed that healthcare workers are exposed to occupational hazard in their workplace, while 1(0.66%) disagreed that healthcare workers are exposed to occupational hazard in their workplace while providing care for patient.

Table 1.2. Excessive workload causes hazards.

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	144	96
No	3	2
Void	3	2
Total	150	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

The above table shows that, 144(96%) of the total population agreed that excessive workload causes occupational hazards, 3(2%) of the total disagreed that excessive workload on healthcare workers causes hazards, while 3(2%) of the total population were void responses.

Table 1.3. Low staff strength leads to hazards

Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	127	84.6
No	23	15.3
Total	150	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

The table above shows that 127(84.6%) of the total population agreed that shortage of staffs leads to hazards on the healthcare workers, while 23(15.3%) disagreed that low staff strength leads to hazards among healthcare workers who care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

## Discussion:

•The study was carried out to examine the prevalence and incidence of occupational hazards among healthcare workers who provide care for PLWHADS. It was discovered 99.3% of respondents attested that healthcare workers face hazards while providing care for patient.

•From the data collected and analyzed in the study, it was discovered that excessive work load led to occupational hazard among healthcare workers.

•The findings shows that the issue of occupational hazards among HCWs is everyday phenomena encountered by the practitioners but little or no attention is been given to it, it is pertinent to state here that occupational hazard among HCWs in Southern Nigeria is a preventable issue if only the parties involves(health worker and policy makers in the sector) will play their respective roles actively.

## Conclusion:

Occupational safety and health should not be sidelined as a service delivery issue. HCWs health and well – being is an important aspect of workers motivation and job satisfaction, which influences productivity as well as retention. Healthcare worker safety also affects the quality of care; caring for caregivers should be a priority area of concern for the health system performance.

## Implications:

The findings of this study have implications for both education and health safety policy. Our development as a nation doe indeed lies in our ability to develop a good and save working environment for the HCWs, good patient – HCW relationship and a well implemented healthcare policy in the nation health sector. A growing nation or economy, is that nation who has put the health and safety of his citizens and providers first as a policy priority.