

## ASSESSMENT ON THE PRACTICE OF TRUCK DRIVERS TOWARDS HIV/AIDS CONTROL IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*There has been global concern regarding HIV/AIDS epidemic particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The magnitude of the epidemic results not only in loss of productivity to the country creating unparalleled social and medical challenges. The purpose of this study is to investigate the practice of trucks drivers towards HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. To do this, one research questions and its corresponding hypothesis was formulated in order to give direction to study. Descriptive survey research design was used in the study, while a combination of stratified sampling; simple random convincing sampling techniques were employed to select ample population. A total of 782 truck drivers were purposely selected in twelve states across the Six Geo-political zone of Nigeria. There are North-west, North-east, North-central, south-west, south-east, and south-south. A structured questionnaire was design by researchers which were validated by experts in the department of Physical and health Education and pilot tested for reliability which was found to be 0.789 coefficients was used to collect data for study. The findings revealed that Truck drivers' practice towards the control of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria was positive. Moreover, the study revealed that the truck drivers differ significantly by their Educational qualifications in their practice towards HIV/AIDS control in Nigeria. The researcher recommended that behavioral change in communication (BCC) activities should be intensified through mass media (visual and audio) and at stop-over terminals towards enhancing attitudinal change and promoting practices among truck drivers in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Practice, Truck Drivers, HIV/AIDS.

### INTRODUCTION

The Human Immune-Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome {HIV/AIDs} is an epidemic infection causing great concern in developing countries. In Nigeria, the HIV/AIDS index cases are becoming very visible in Nigeria. Research evidence revealed that in 2007 about one out of every four persons in Nigeria had seen someone with HIV or knows someone who died of AIDs. National Agency for the Control of Aids, (2010), revealed that generally,

awareness of HIV/AIDs was very high (93.8%); however, correct knowledge of all the routes of HIV transmission and as well, methods of prevention and control have remained low (54% and 52.5% respectively). The use of condom in the last sex act was never lower (16%) despite the fact that the predominant mode of HIV transmission is through sex in Nigeria (NACA, 2010). In addition, current estimate of people living with HIV/AIDs in Nigeria based on the last sentinel survey released in 2010 was 2.98 million implying that over 95% of Nigerians are not infected with HIV/AIDs (NACA, 2010). This scenario suggested that serious attention should be given to prevention strategies in order to prevent further damage. Generally, many population and sub groups are considered high risk for HIV/AIDs in Nigeria. These include commercial sex workers, injecting drug users, men sexing men, uniform service personnel and truck drivers (NACA, 2010). Truck drivers are seen as critical sources of HIV/AIDs transmission due to their high rates of unprotected sex with multiple partners (Corn Man, Sarah Benziger, Fisher and Angela, 2007) heterosexual transmission is the main route of HIV transmission and long distance truck drivers are seen as critical sources of HIV risk and transmission, they spend extended periods of time away from their families, often stopping at stopover terminals or road side eateries, where it is common for them to pick up a sex worker, have sex with her and drop her off at the next terminal (Corn man et al, 2007). Anywhere, from 70% to 90% of truck drivers have multiple sexual partners, and only a very small percentage of them use condoms (Bryan, Fisher and Benziger, 2001) through their high risk sexual behavior, truck drivers not only put themselves and sex workers at risk of HIV, but also the general population when they return home and have sex with their primary and secondary partners. Truck drivers do not have some knowledge of HIV/AIDs, but their knowledge is not consistent or comprehensive and their knowledge and practice do not go hand in hand. Despite general awareness of HIV/AIDs and its dangers, truck drivers do not report a uniform risky behavior such as the use of commercial sex workers service and casual sex with multiple partners (Blaire, 1997). The role of truck drivers in spreading HIV/AIDs in Africa is generally accepted and well documented. Some Behavioral Change Communication (BCC, 1997) campaigns targeted at youth and adolescent girls cast truck drivers as immoral characters to be avoided and feared. Furthermore, the campaign targeted adolescent girls who portrayed truck drivers as predators seeking to exploit young girls' financially difficult situations. The most common mode of transmission of HIV/AIDs in sub-Saharan Africa is unprotected sexual intercourse. The use of preventive measures such as latex condom substantially reduces the risk of infections for both partners provided the condoms are used correctly and consistently (FMOH, 2007). Condom use among truck drivers is inconsistent despite their knowledge of HIV/AIDS. According to study conducted in Niger Republic reasons given for not using condom include lack of time, lack of availability, and disagreement with partners who dislike condoms or decrease in pleasure. Condom use among truck drivers is low with their regular partners. In Burkina Faso, condom use 65% with occasional partners 49% with regular partners. In Benin, 45% of respondents used with condoms with occasional partners, 43% with sex workers and only 5% with spouses. The same trend is observed among sex workers with their boyfriends or their regular clients, they tend to make a distinction between regular

clients who do not have to wear condoms and unknown clients who are requested to wear condoms (USAID, DFID, & UNAIDS, 2007).

Most studies (Laukirna, Miuzarubi, Outwater, Mwaijonga, Valadez, Nyamwaya, Swai, Saidel&Myamuryekunge, 2000), showed that the target population, in other words then, at risk are aware of the condoms as a prevention strategy, there is much to be done in making the use of condoms more consistent. For instance, baseline and follow-up survey of truck drivers in 1997 and 2000 in Togo and Burkina Faso reflect the changes in sexual patterns; truck drivers were 3 times more likely to use condoms with occasional partners at follow up than at base line. This shows that truck drivers are aware of the need to change their sexual behaviours. Studies on Tanzanian peer education in truck drivers and prostitute suggest that men and women who were most likely to use condoms did not have a stable partner and perceived themselves to be at risk. At the same time, focus groups of truck drivers and prostitute in Kenya showed that participant wanted more information on negotiation of condom use with reluctant partners (Laukirna, Miuzarubi, Outwater, Mwaijonga, Valadez, Nyamwaya, Swai, Saidel&Myamuryekunge, 2000).

Hope, (2001), reported that taxi drivers revealed that 35% believed that using condom prevent the spread of sexually transmitted disease (STI), but do not prevent the spread of HIV/AIDs, male resistance partly due to misconception about condom use and women's inability to negotiate safer sex due to socio-economic and cultural conditions faced by women is attributed to low condom use among the respondents. Condom use among young people according to Diana, (2010) plays an important role in the prevention of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as unwanted pregnancies. Knowledge of place where to get condoms helps youth to obtain and use condoms and also make them to use in better position to make informed decisions on issues pertaining their sexuality. The use of condoms can reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, most active youth in sub-Saharan Africa do not consistently use condoms because they are too expensive for the youth and they do not know where to get them (Diana, 2010). The use of male condom among the long distance truck drivers in Nigeria, a major group that transmit HIV is usually low and erratic (Sunmola, 2005). To effectively promote their consistent use, it was necessary to understand the driver's sexual practices, experience of barriers to condom use and HIV/AIDs related attitudes. In a study conducted in Nigeria among 412 truck drivers on sexual practice and condom use revealed that the major barriers experienced by drivers were that condom reduced their sexual interest. About 70% of the drivers knew about condom as HIV preventive measure, but only 9% consistently use them, the drivers that acknowledge that they always use a condom, had secondary education, were less likely to report that a condom was inconveniencing or caused health problems rarely used local decoction to improve sexual energy and frequency listened to the radio (Sunmola, 2005)

Word Bank, (2001) observes that Transport workers tend to have HIV/AIDs knowledge and risk perception, but are generally ignorant of the consequences of casual sexual relationship

and that lack of knowledge about HIV can shape the perception of workers risks of sexual behavior. Moreover, Studies have found that transport workers can engage in risky sexual behavior, even when they have a general knowledge about HIV/AIDs. An importance reason for this behavior is that transport workers face many risks on daily basis, making the danger of HIV/AIDs more remote and therefore seemingly less important (World Bank, 20001). Low perception of risk can also result in low or incorrect condom use. Condom use remains one of the key methods of prevention against HIV but consistent condom use tends to be low among truck drivers, particular with regular partners and sex workers. Truck drivers reported that they do not use condom because they have only one sexual partner. Such as “road wife’ with whom they stay when traveling certain routes, they trust the individual they have sex with, they do not find condom pleasurable and they do not want to make their spouses suspicious by starting the use of condom with them. Change from risky to less risky behavior is necessary to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS among this group. However, before risky behaviors can be change, it is necessary to explore the reasons for taking risks. Social culture believes and norms as well as the deteriorating economy may be blamed for the trend in sub-Saharan Africa. Other factors are lower school qualifications, school dropout and upbringing (Kabuwe-Kaunde, 1974).

International Organization for Migration (2008) observed that truck drivers are highly mobile and spend long hours on the road away from families. Their needs for entertainment and female companionship make them very likely to use the services of commercial sex workers (CSW) in stop over towns near major transportation route. The stop over towns have developed an entire infrastructure of network and services meeting the business and recreational needs of truck drivers which include petrol pumps inspection period, lodges, bar and brother and a high population of commercial sex workers. (Chaturvedi et al., 2006) stated that, many truck drivers have multiple relationships with women often, but not always. Commercial sex workers are readily at truck stops over along the main highways, where truck drivers stop to eat and rest. However, commercial is only one part of a driver’s sexual network. International Organization for Migration (2003) reported that is common for truckers to have other partners in the area which they drive, for instance in Cote d Voire almost 40% of truck drivers have had sex with an occasional partner whereas only 16% had sex with sex workers. Stop over towns often contain a high proportion of young women and men from surrounding rural areas attracted by the economic opportunities in such towns.

The migrants who are mostly truck drivers moving from one end of the country to another and sometimes across the border are at risk for HIV/AIDS as they are part from their wives for long periods approximately 50-51 hours per week and therefore result to engage in casual sexual relations with commercial sex workers and/or other partners (female or male). Wives are at risk of contracting HIV when the infected men return home. In a study of 40 truck drivers attending STD clinics in Karachi Pakistan, 40% of them indicated sexual contacts with female sex workers and 90% of these had sexual contacts with more than one female sexual worker. Moreover, 53% indicated multiple homosexual contacts (Kwawaja, Gibney, Ahmed &vermund, 1997)

The epidemiological data available shows that HIV/AIDS prevalence among truck drivers is ranging from 3% to 32%. Comparisons shows that truck drivers have higher infection rates than the general population and pregnant women, but lower rates than TB patients and sex workers (IOM, 20007). A number of factor are reported to contribute to trucker's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, THESE include their demographic profile, sexual behavior, working conditions, socio economic environment and level of awareness regarding HIV/AIDS. Studies reviewed reported that truck drivers were mostly of urban origin and young. Most are at an age when they are most sexual active. The West Africa studies reviewed the age range of truck drivers was between 15 and 48 years most of them age 30 and above (IOM, 2005) Anwar, (2005) further observed that driver's lifestyle comes with interest risks, such as infections disease in many place they drive through, robbery, war zones and lengthy delays, and there is a point of view that most truck drivers accept high level of risk. This compounds an attitude prevailing in many African cultures that there is underlying cause of illness and death. There is increased focus on mobile population (drivers) as key target population for HIV/AIDs activities in many countries. He also reports that truck drivers are seen among the most at risk population depending on the specific factors which contributes to their risks of HIV/AIDs infections (International Organization for Migration, 2008). Adult mobile workers such as truck drivers frequently engage in risky sex. On average, 35% of mobile workers engage in frequent sex with sex workers and only 45% use condoms (World Bank, 2008). In Turkey (Charturvedi et al., 2006), indicated that factors strongly associated with engaging in risky sex include alcohol use and time away from home. Frequent alcohol use is associated with likelihood of engaging in risky sexual activity with those workers who on average spend five months or more away from home, are 34% more likely to engage in sexual behavior (World Bank 2008).

Factors related to risky sexual behavior among mobile workers such as truck drivers, mobile workers spend considerable time away from home which gives them the opportunities to engage in casual and period sex over 50% of the mobile workers surveyed has spent five months away from home, whereas, truck drivers spend sorter periods away from home. secondly 44% of the workers reported drinking alcohol at least occasionally and among all worker's sailor reported and higher frequency of alcohol use studies revealed that under influence of alcohol people are more likely to make irrational or decisions, prior to drinking people may fully intend to use condom but drinking the may forget of decide the condom are not important (Yeh, 2011).

Patterns of risky behavior might prove resistance to change. Study indicate that truck drivers behave in sexual risk ways, 11.65 of them report having a sex worker in the past six month, and 15.35% report having multiple sexual partners in the moreover, low risk taken behavior is reported among truck drivers compare to previous studies which truck drivers (80%) indicate having sex with female commercial sex workers, behavior regarding condom use are less encouraging 19.1% of those who visited female sex workers in the past six month reported using condom (Dude et, al.2009). truck drivers as a group are highly sexually active. A survey of truck drives visiting sex workers at truck stop over in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa indicate that 37%

of all men less than 25% reporting the use of condoms during and anal sex. 70% of men reported having wives or girlfriends, 29% reported never using condoms with workers and only 37% reported above (Ramjea, Karim, & Sturm, 1998). Men having sex with men (MSM) may be contributing to the risk of HIV/AIDS (Marcus, 2001)0.

Treatment from government hospitals, non-government organization, counseling and treatment centers, private practitioners and self-medication (moon, 2002). More than 1/3 of sexually active truck drivers and male youth (35.25%) have never used condom.

Reducing of sexual pleasure was given as the most common reason (42%) for not using among youth. 48% of female sex workers have never used condom, disagreement of their partners was mentioned as the two main reasons for not using condom, (14.2%) youth 9.9% of truck drivers were concern about HIV injected and less than 1% have been tested for HIV before, but there was not any significant difference based on their previous history of extra marital sex and their person risk perception. 16% of commercial sex workers (CSW) were concern about HIV and 8% and 8 of them have heard about it before (Ministry of Health & Ministry of Environment, 2004).

Practice of HIV testing was low (43.1%) among the drivers, also a comparable low level of screening of 30.0% were reported amongst long distance drivers in Zambia (Aniebue&Aniebue, 2011). This serves as an important entry point into the care and support service. Prior to 2004/2005 they were very limited access to HIV counseling and testing (HCT) service by the general population (UNAIDS 2010). Moreover, in 2007, only 3% of health facilities had HIV testing and HIV testing and counseling service and only 11.7 % of women and men aged 15-49 years had received an HIV testing and counselling for approximately every 100,000 Nigeria adults, this shows how desperately the government needs to scale up HIV testing service (Amazo, Aido Anthony &Tswabk, 2007). There has been increased campaign for involvement of Nigerian youth in HV counseling and testing for HIV/AIDS given their vulnerability to the virus. However, study by Victor &Ezebunwe (2007) reveal that a wide gap exists between awareness and involvement in HCT. Although, 95.3% of respondents are aware of HCT, only 8.8% of the population had undergone such testing, while 15% of respondent's ad undertake HIV testing either compulsory or voluntary. The reasons for this inconsistency were that majority of the respondent feel likely at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS (Victor &Ezebunwe, 2007)

## **Methodology**

Descriptive survey research was used in the study. This is because survey research gives a snapshot description to people's practice identify gaps, which could be recommended for correction through intervention (Araoye 2004) survey studies are usually used to find the fact by collecting the data directly from population or sample. It is the most commonly used design in educational research. The researcher collects the data to descript the nature of existing condition to determine the relationship the existed between specific event. It involves acquiring

information about one or group of people perhaps about their characteristic, opinion, attitude or previous experience by asking question and tabulating their answers (Araoye, 2004).

The population of this study comprised 250,000 (Nigeria union of transport workers 2014) trucks drivers plying Nigerian Road in six geopolitical zones namely South-West, South-South, and South-East, North-West and North-central. In this study, stratified sampling method were used stratified sampling is a method of sampling that sub-divided a population into separated and more homogeneous sub-population called stratum (Kleinn, 2007). To do this the 36 state of the federation and F.C.T. was stratified based on the existing six geopolitical zones namely North-west, North-west, North-East, North-central, South-east and South-South. Two states from each of the geopolitical zone was selected using the simple random sampling (SRS), through the deep and pick method. To do this names of state were written each on piece of paper they are folded and shuffled, and two of each of this paper were then picked one at a time for each zone until the required number for each state are selected. By this, a total number of 12 states were used for the study. However, the sample for the study was drawn by the use of convenience sampling techniques.

Convenience sampling is a method in which for convenience sake the study units that happen to be available at the time of data collection are selected (Degu and Yigzaw, 2004). The sample size for the study were 782 truck drivers this was obtained by the use of table number for determining sample size design by Boyd (2006)

A structure questionnaire was used in the study which was developed by the researcher. The questionnaires were made of two sections A include 4 demography characteristics of the respondents, Section B contains 29 items on the practice by truck drivers towards HIV/AIDS control.

The design instrument was subjected to a pilot study in order to determine its consistency and reliability. A total of 170 subjects were purposely selected, 100 truck drivers at Okene Motor pack in Kogi State and 70 truck drivers at Bukuru Motor Park, in Plateau State.

These were not among the states for the study selected for this study. 154 questionnaires out of 170 distributions were returned correctly filled representing 90% of the total questionnaire distributed. The data collected by the researchers determined the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The data obtained by the pilot was coded and analyzed with the statistical package of social science (SPSS) among the options selected for establishing the reliability coefficient and the internal consistency index were the Cronbach Alpha, the Guttman Split method and the Spearman Brown equal half procedure. The observed reliability from the Cronbach Alpha was 0.803. While the Spearman Brown Equal half gave coefficient of 0.730, while the Guttman split half method gave coefficient of 0.725. The interclass average measured consistency coefficient of 0.879. From these observed coefficients, the instrument was considered to be reliable and internally consistent. The observed coefficient agreed with Anastasi (1980), which stated that an

instrument is reliability. Since the reliability for this study is close to +1. According to the author, the closer it is to 1 the lower the reliability of the instrument and the lesser it is to 1 the lower the reliability. Since the reliability for this study is close to +1, the instrument was adjudged to be reliable for its study.

To collect data for the study, five researchers were assigned under the supervision of the researcher to administer the questionnaire. The research assistants were train and assigned to the randomly selected state. A total of 782 truck drivers were administered questioners in 24 purposively selected stop over terminals across 12 randomly selected states of six geopolitical zones of Nigeria out of 782 questionnaire administered return correctly filler presenting 95% of the questionnaire. To administered the questionnaire trucks drivers were not in the evening during their leisure hours when resting then the research assistants administered the questionnaire, for these that can read and write they were given to fill and returned within 2 to 3 days while for those that cannot read and write the research assistant of reading and ticking the response of the respondents accordingly. This process took 35 days to cover the entire country. Considering the sensitive nature of the research the researcher ensured that the integrity of the respondents was not jeopardized, consequently, the research assistants were advance to be extra careful in administering the questionnaire, assured respondents of the confidentiality of the information they provide. The respondents were also explained the purposed of the study. To test the formulated hypotheses of this study, they following statistic were used descriptive statistics to determine e frequency, percentage mean and standard deviation were to examine the extent of practice of truck drivers towards HIV/AIDS control in Nigeria. Inferential statistics was used to analyses the practice of truck drivers towards HIV/AIDS control in Nigeria. One sample t-test was used hypothesis.

## Results

Hypothesis1. The practice of truck drivers towards HIV/AIDS control in Nigeria is not significant

Practice of the truck drivers was insolated for test of significance in this hypothesis. The one sample t-test procedure was used and summarized in table 1.

Table 1: one sample t-test on practice of truck drivers towards HIV/AIDS control in Nigeria

Variable	Mean	Std.Dev.	Std. Erro	t-val
Practice	3.44	0.047	0.230	13.0
Fixed mean	3.00	0.000	0.000	

(t-critical = 1.96,  $p > 0.05$ )

From the result in the table, the truck drivers could be said to be adequate or significant practice towards the control of HIV/AIDS in the country. This is because the observed mean score (3.44) is not significantly higher than the test mean (3.00) used for the test. The value (13.020) obtained for the test is greater than the critical value of 1.96. The level of significance observed for the test 0,000 ( $P > 0.05$ ). By implication the null hypothesis that the practices of truck driver towards HIV/AIDS in Nigerian are not significant can be rejected. This means that the null hypothesis is hereby rejected.

### **Discussion**

The study investigated the significance level of the truck driver's practices towards HIV/AIDS control. The result revealed that the practices could be considered statistically significant. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. The mean score shows that the truck drivers' practices reflected their expressed knowledge on the disease control in the country. In a similar investigation, Anwar, (2005), reported a strong link has been established between truck driver's life style and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, and that majority of truck drivers are aware about sexual transmitted disease (STDs) and out of whom, more than half named at least one of the STDs, more than half of the respondents were aware about routes of transmission such as blood transfusion and parental, that is, mother to child transmission. This finding is consistent with the report of IOM, (2008), who reported that truck drivers are link through sexual networks to their partners at home, during their journeys and their partner in the site of destination these network stretch across regions, connecting low and high prevalence HIV epidemics, different level sexual and HIV/AIDS education. This finding agrees with Bhagwan, (2012), who reported that it is generally accepted and well documented that long distance truck drivers has been and remain one of the key forces in the spread of HIV/AIDS, and that the role of the truck drivers in the transmission of HIV/AIDS is rooted in the lifestyle that comes with their occupation.

### **Conclusion**

From the finding of this investigation into the practice of truck drivers towards HIV/AIDS control in Nigeria, the researcher wish to conclude that:

The practices of truck drivers toward HIV/AIDS were statistically significant. However, their practices did not reflect level of the level knowledge demonstrated by them in this study.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings from the analyzed data, the researcher suggested that behavior change communication (BCC) activities should be intensified through media houses (visual and audio) as well as stopover terminal towards enhancing attitudinal change and promoting practices among truck drivers in Nigeria.

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