

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)

Libraries at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

10-2021

Health Information-Seeking Behaviour of People and Implications for School-driven HIV Prevention Programmes

Nkechinyere Charity Edeh
University of Nigeria - Nsukka

Chiedu Eseadi
University of Nigeria - Nsukka, chiedu.esedi@unn.edu.ng

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Edeh, Nkechinyere Charity and Eseadi, Chiedu, "Health Information-Seeking Behaviour of People and Implications for School-driven HIV Prevention Programmes" (2021). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 6427.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/6427>

Health Information-Seeking Behaviour of People and Implications for School-driven HIV Prevention Programmes

Nkechinyere Charity Edeh¹, and Chiedu Eseadi²

¹Department of Social Science Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka

²Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria Nsukka

Correspondence: Chiedu Eseadi, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria Nsukka. E-mail: chiedu.esyadi@unn.edu.ng

Abstract

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) has remained a social problem owing to the unavailability of a cure for the disease. Scholars have identified preventive behaviour as a remedy for the disease. Preventive behaviour is influenced by the information-seeking behaviour of individuals. This paper provides insight into people's health information-seeking behaviour concerning HIV prevention and implications for school-driven HIV prevention programmes. This was deemed necessary to encourage schools to brace up prevention efforts and foster understanding of what information students seek and how they seek such information particularly in this era of information and communication technology as this is very important for HIV prevention. Also, fostering understanding of students' health information-seeking behaviour could be instrumental to schools in creating programmes for fostering students' health behaviour change in respect of HIV. Previous studies reviewed in this paper regarding health information-seeking behaviour of people focused on people living with HIV, college students, Facebook users, university students among others.

Keywords: Health information-seeking behaviour, HIV, Students

Introduction

All over the world, Human Immunodeficiency Virus [HIV] has become a serious social problem that the world is struggling to control. As a retrovirus, HIV attacks and destroy the immune system of the body [1,2]. Although everyone (including adults, young people and children) is at risk of being infected with HIV, the disease has persistently spread particularly among young people. Researchers have documented that adolescents and young people are perhaps, the most vulnerable to HIV infections [1, 4-6].

The worldwide estimation regarding the number of adolescents and young people living with HIV stood at 5.4 million in 2012; while up to 160,000 adolescents (aged: 10-19 years) in 2013 were reported to be living with HIV [3]. In the absence of a cure, health information is fundamental for HIV prevention. This is very important, especially among adolescent students. Students need to seek information to enable them to identify and adopt appropriate prevention practices related to HIV and cope with changes, crises, or uncertainties often brought about by HIV infection.

The term ‘information-seeking behaviour’ is used to describe the manner in which individuals often search for and use information for varied reasons [7]. It covers some steps like identifying and understanding information problems, creating a search plan, actual searching of information, evaluating the search results, and if need be, repeating the process [7]. The author identified the sources of information as personal experience, peer group, healthcare workers, manual documents, electronic sources (e.g. Internet, television and radio), online databases, and print materials (e.g. leaflets, journals, books, handbills) [7].

Motivating people to acquire and use appropriate information about HIV can enhance the prevention of HIV. Therefore, information seeking is one of the ways of reducing new incidence of HIV [8]. Such information that should be sought includes information about causes of HIV and risk factors including dangers of multiple sexual practices, dangers of

unprotected sex, best ways of protecting oneself like abstinence and being faithful, what to do when exposed to risks, HIV testing, appropriate use of condom, sexual communication, sexual assertiveness, and general care provided for people living with HIV, proven strategies for managing HIV, information about HIV risk behaviours, and facts and statistics about HIV. In this paper, therefore, the researchers sought to provide insight into people's health information-seeking behaviour in relation to HIV prevention and implications for school-driven HIV prevention programmes.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

The table below shows a number of studies regarding people's health information-seeking behaviour about HIV prevention. The studies explored health information-seeking behaviour and sources of information-seeking behaviour which are essential for HIV prevention and management of HIV infection among people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA).

Authors	Aims/Objectives	Research Method	Study Results
Adebayo [7]	The study aimed to find out the level of information-seeking behaviour as well as the association between information-seeking behaviour and risk practices among PLWHA in South-West Nigeria	The survey design was used in the study. The study sample comprised 452 PLWHA in tertiary health institutions.	The study discovered that information seeking of PLWHA was very high. Electronic and printing materials were shown to be very important sources of information. The study also discovered a significant link between information seeking and risk practices among PLWHA.
Cob et al. [8]	This study investigated how black college women perceive HIV	This is a qualitative study using 45 black young female college students	It showed that respondents sought information related to HIV and identified barriers to information seeking as mistrust of health information and ignorance. HIV messages were perceived to be relevant if

	prevention information needs and their online HIV prevention information needs		they are interactive, practical and disseminated through trustworthy individuals/institutions,
Ybarra et al.[9]	This research determined young people's sources of information about health and wellbeing	The study sample comprised secondary school students aged 12–18	The respondents indicated that the sources of sexual health and HIV information include the Internet, parents, teachers and other adults around.
Kachota et al.[10]	The study aimed to find out the sexual and reproductive health information (SRHI) seeking behaviour of tertiary institution students	Explanatory research design	The study indicated that there is a connection between SRHI behaviour and demographic variables like age, sex, marital status and religion. Younger students, female students, married students and students who are not religious were more likely to seek SRHI than their counterparts
Tessema [11]	The study aimed to investigate construction workers' HIV/AIDS Information seeking behaviour and associated factors	This was an institution-based cross-sectional study of a sample of 705 construction workers	The study discovered that construction workers do not have appropriate and satisfactory information-seeking behaviour towards HIV/AIDS.
Iloma et al. [12]	The research aimed to ascertain whether health education affect healthcare seeking behaviour of people who are already living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA)	The study used quasi-experimental research design and a sample of 80 PLWHA	It was found that health education builds the knowledge base of PLWHA about basic issues concerning HIV and it significantly improves their health outcomes and consequently, reduces the risk of spread of the virus.

Barman-Adhikari et al. [13]	The study's aim was to identify correlates of the characteristics related to help seeking behaviours of homeless youth.	Survey research design was employed in the study	The respondents reported looking for HIV or other STI related information through the Internet to find answers to general health questions.
Shakir et al. [14]	The research aimed to assess the link between seeking STI information online and the intentions to use condom	This was a cross-sectional, nationwide online survey of Facebook users	The study reported that an association exists between seeking STI information online and intentions to use condom as a way of STI prevention.
Magee et al. [15]	The study's aim was to investigate the use of Internet for seeking sexual health information among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) young people	Mixed-methods approach using a sample of 32 LGBT young people	Finding indicated that the Internet appeared to be widely used to seek sexual health information, particularly information about STIs/HIV. The stigma associated with accessing LGBT or HIV information discourage respondents from seeking health information and fear of contracting STIs/HIV motivates people to seek health information.
Huber et al. [16]	The study aimed to explore the information needs and information-seeking behaviours of people living with HIV	Survey methodology was employed and a sample of 137 people living with HIV	Respondents sought information concerning the disease, health, and well-being. Also, newsletters, magazines, personal physician, friends, pamphlets and brochures were means of seeking information.
White [17]	The study determined the factors that predict HIV information seeking behaviour of university students	A mixed-method approach using university students	Finding revealed that the predictors were direct experience and health consciousness while low-risk perception and high self-efficacy beliefs made people think there was no need to seek HIV information.

The studies reviewed on health information-seeking behaviour were centred on people living with HIV [7, 12, 16], college students [8, 9], construction workers [11], homeless

youths [13], Facebook users [14], LGBT people [15], and university students [17]. One study demonstrated that a statistically significant association exists between information-seeking behaviour and risk practices of PLWHA [7]. However, it has been suggested that more empirical studies are required to elucidate the manner in which students obtain and respond to HIV information particularly in this 21st-century era of information and communication technology (ICT) [17].

Implications for School-driven HIV prevention programme

School children especially those who are in secondary schools should be motivated to seek information on HIV to enable them to protect themselves against the virus. The knowledge of the HIV information people seek is very important to gain the potential knowledge necessary to avoid risk practices [7]. The knowledge of the sources of HIV information for students is also a vital step in designing school-driven prevention programmes. All programmes targeted at students should analyse their major source of interaction and the characteristics of the audience. Information dissemination approaches like traditional methods which consider the target populations to be passive people responding comparably and often ignore the likelihood that individuality could impact how people decide to act in response to health information are now out of trend [17]. Young people now mostly depend on the Internet for information about HIV[15]. HIV information that is sought from sources such as electronic and print media has the potential of positively impacting HIV-related risk practices of people [7]. As a result, having an understanding of the kind of health information students seek and how they seek such information in this era of ICT is very important for HIV prevention. Also, when students' health information-seeking behaviour is understood, it could be instrumental to schools in creating programmes for fostering students' health behaviour change in respect of HIV.

Conclusion

This research examines past investigations on the health information-seeking behaviour of people and highlights the implications for school-driven HIV prevention programmes among students. Previous literature reviewed in this paper focused on the health information-seeking behaviour of people living with HIV, college students, construction workers, homeless youths, Facebook users, LGBT people, and university students. Appropriate information-seeking behaviour in respect to HIV prevention is very important and can help to reduce the rate of spread of the virus in the student population. It is, therefore, vital to continuously equip students with relevant information on how to protect themselves from the virus. Empirical studies are required to elucidate how students obtain and respond to information regarding HIV prevention.

References

- [1] Awoleye, O. J. &Thron, C. (2015). Determinants of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection in Nigeria: A synthesis of the literature. *Journal of AIDS and HIV Research*, 7(9), 117-129. DOI: 10.5897/JAHR2015.0338
- [2] Edeh, N.C., Nwaubani, O. O., Eseadi, C., Ogidi, C. I. &Offor, C. C. (2021). Awareness and attitude of senior secondary school students towards HIV/AIDS risk factors and preventive measures in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.*Library Philosophy and Practice*, 5368.<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/5368>
- [3] National Agency for the Control of AIDS [NACA](2016). National HIV strategy for adolescents and young people 2016-2020. www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protrav/---ilo_aids/documents/legaldocument/wcms_532857
- [4] Aanu, E.M. &Olatoye, R.A. (2011). A survey of the knowledge of the modes of transmission of HIV/AIDS among some youths. *International Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 2,(1), 62-67.
- [5] Aboki, H., Folayan, M.O., Uduak, D.U.,&Ogunlayi, M. (2014). Changes in Sexual Risk Behavior Among Adolescents: Is the HIV Prevention Programme in Nigeria Yielding Results? *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 18(3), 109-117.
- [6] Fagbamigbe, A.F., Adebowale, A.S. &Olaniyan, F. A. (2011). A comparative analysis of condom use among unmarried youths in rural community in Nigeria. *Public Health Research*, 1(1), 8-16.DOI: 10.5923/j.phr.20110101.02
- [7] Adebayo, T. T. (2019). Information seeking behaviour and risk practices among people living with HIV/AIDS in South West, Nigeria. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. 2172.<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/2172>
- [8]Cobb, P. F., Kvasny, L, &Kiwanuka-Tondo, J. (2014). Online HIV prevention information. *Internet Research*,24(4). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IntR-09-2013-0193>

- [9] Ybarra, M.L., Emenyonu, N., Nansera, D., Kiwanuka, J. & Bangsberg, D. R. (2007). Health information seeking among Mbararan adolescents: results from the Uganda Media and You survey. *Health Education Research*, 23, (2), 249–258, <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cym026>
- [10] Kachota, B. J. & Kassim, M. (2021). Sexual and reproductive health information-seeking behaviour of undergraduate students at Mzumbe University, Morogoro – Tanzania. *University of Dar es Salaam Library Journal*, 16(1), 115-130.
- [11] Tessema, M. (2019). Information seeking behavior and associated factors among construction workers towards HIV/AIDS in Debre Berhan town, Northeast Ethiopia. *Research Square*, 18742. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-18742/v1>
- [12] Iloma, U. R. & Ekenedo, G. O. (2020). Effect of health education on health care seeking behavior of people living with HIV and AIDS in Nigeria. *Educational Research International*, 9(1), 1-8.
- [13] Barman-Adhikari D., Rijal D. P. (2014). Factors affecting health seeking behaviour of senior citizens of Dharan. *Journal of Nobel Medical College*, 39(1): 50-57. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3126/jonmc.v31i1.10055>
- [14] Shakir, S.M.M., Wong, L.P., Abdullah, K. L. & Adam, P. (2019). Online STI information seeking behaviour and condom use intentions among young Facebook users in Malaysia. *Health Promotion International*, 1–9. DOI: 10.1093/heapro/daz108
- [15] Magee, J.C., Bigelow, L., DeHaan, S. & Mustanski, B. S. (2012). Sexual health information seeking online: A mixed-methods study among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young people. *Health Education & Behavior* 39(3) 276–289. DOI: 10.1177/1090198111401384 <http://heb.sagepub.com>
- [16] Huber, J.T. & Cruz, J. M. (2000) Information needs and information-seeking behaviors of HIV positive men and women. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 19 (3), 39-48, DOI: 10.1300/J115v19n03_03
- [17] White, L.A. (2009). Hiv-related information seeking among residential university students in three Caribbean countries. Dissertation, College of Communication and Information, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.