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HIV/AIDS: Nigeria

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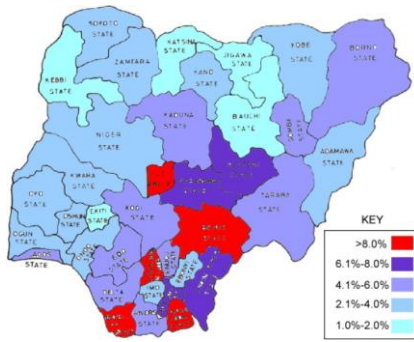
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HIV/AIDS IN NIGERIA

LAUREN TROPINSKI PUBLIC HEALTH BRIE

HIV/AIDS

HIV is a communicable disease that attacks the immune system. It is transmitted through bodily fluids such as blood, semen, rectal fluids, vaginal fluids, and breast milk (Avert 2018). The main ways someone can be infected are through unprotected sex, using contaminated injecting



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equipment or from mother to baby during pregnancy (Avert 2018). The most affected population in Nigeria are people who engage in unprotected heterosexual sex; This population accounts for 80% of new HIV infections. More affected populations include sex workers (18.6% men and 24.5% female), followed by men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs (Avert 2018). HIV prevalence is highest in the

southern state of Nigeria at 5.5% (Bashorun et al. 2014).

There are three main stages of HIV. First is the primary infection when symptoms arise one to four weeks after becoming infected; the symptoms are like those of the flu and only last a week. The second stage is the

asymptomatic stage when the virus may not reveal any other symptoms for 10 to 15 years but will be active and cause damage to the immune system. The last stage is the symptomatic HIV

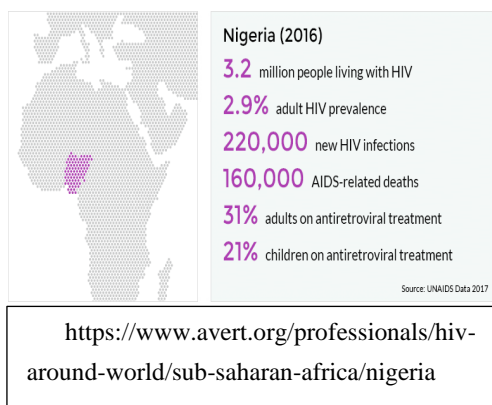
infection where you are most likely to get a serious infection you cannot fight off, at this stage you are considered to have AIDS (Unaid 2018). HIV is diagnosed through rapid diagnostic tests which can provide same day results to help with early treatment and care. Virologic testing is used to diagnose infants. However, many people are unaware of their status because of limited testing sites in the country.

TREATMENT

There is no cure for HIV and AIDS, but there is treatment to control the virus. The use of Antiretrovirals help keep a low level of HIV in your body and helps the immune system recover as well as reduces chances of passing the virus onto others (Unaid 2016). Antiretroviral treatment use is low in Nigeria with only 30% of people living with HIV receiving treatment due to limited funding, making it difficult to handle the epidemic (Unaid 2018).

Nigeria's population is 160 million and there is an estimated HIV prevalence of 3.34%. As of 2014 there were 210,000 new HIV infections reported and 160,000 AIDS related deaths (Avert 2018). Risk factors include poverty, cultural

limitations, non-condom use, not knowing your status, and sharing needles.



INTERVENTIONS

Since Nigeria has one of the largest prevalence of HIV infections in Africa national governments have recognized potential of community-based organizations (CBO) (Kakietek et al. 2013). These include prevention activities and services, support facilities, income-generating activities,

and community advocacy. Most funds for CBO's were used for prevention especially in rural areas where few care services are located (Kakietek et al. 2013). Another successful intervention is providing education to adolescents, who are at risk for new infections. The program Family Life and

HIV Education (LLHE) includes family life and HIV education which are part of school curriculum in Nigeria (Adeomi et al. 2014). Some limitations to HIV/AIDS prevention are the limited funding available for these programs.

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