

Factors influencing partners' clinic attendance among HIV positive patients attending an antiretroviral clinic in Benue state, Nigeria

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Introduction

- Globally, most HIV transmissions occur among heterosexual cohabiting couples.¹
- Cohabiting couples in high HIV prevalence areas contribute 56-93 percent of incident heterosexual infections in Africa.¹
- Couples voluntary counseling and testing as well as regular clinic visits is the most effective behavioral intervention to prevent HIV transmission in this at risk population.²
- Couple-level prevention programmes have not been widely incorporated into the global prevention campaigns.³

Introduction

- In Africa, less than 1% of couples have been jointly tested for HIV.⁴
- In Nigeria, HIV Sentinel Survey 2010 showed prevalence of 4.1%.⁵
- 3.5m people infected⁵
- Range from 1% in Kebbi to 12.7% in Benue State.⁵
- General Hospital, Otukpo has one of the largest HIV/AIDS specialist treatment clinics in Benue.

Objectives

- To determine the proportion of HIV positive who have disclosed their status to their partners.
- To determine the proportion of HIV positive patients whose partners are also positive and attend the same treatment centre.
- To determine the factors influencing same clinic attendance by HIV positive partners.

Methods

- An estimated 1500 clients receiving care at the ARV clinic of GH, Otukpo
- Study population: HIV patients ≥ 18 years with a confirmed sero positive status registered at the ARV clinic
- Study design: descriptive cross sectional study
- Calculated sample size of 270
- Systematic sampling was used to select participants
- Data was collected using structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire
- Analysis done with SPSS version 15

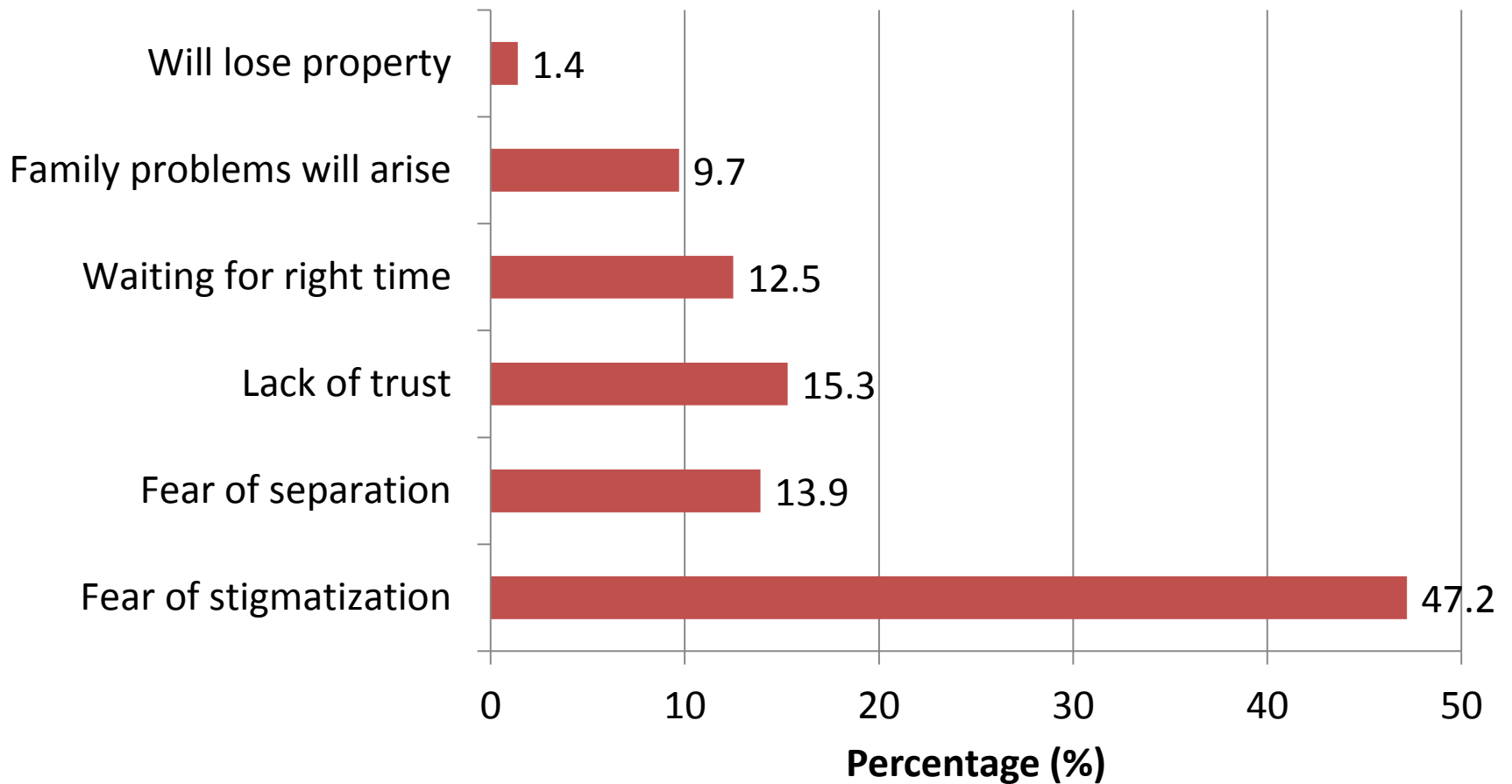
Results

- 261 questionnaires valid for analysis
- The mean age was 35.6 ± 11.6 years
- Most (52.5%) of the respondents were female and 47.5% were male
- 46% married, 37.9% single, 9.6% separated/divorced, 5.7% widowed
- Most (44.4%) with secondary education
- Most (62.8%) self-employed

Sexual behaviour and disclosure of HIV status among respondents

| Variables | Frequency (%) |
|--|---------------|
| Respondents who have sexual partner(s) | 202 (77.4) |
| Currently having sex | 187 (71.6) |
| Use of condoms (n = 187) | 176 (94.1) |
| Disclosure of HIV status to partner(s) (n = 202) | 42 (20.8) |

Reasons for non-disclosure



Partners' clinic attendance

- 89 (44.1%) of respondents who had partners knew their partners to be HIV +
- 38 of the HIV + partners (42.7%) did not attend the same same ARV clinic with respondents.
- Reasons:
 - Fear of stigmatization (31.6%)
 - Attitude of health workers (21.1%)
 - Inconvenient clinic time (13.2%)
 - High cost of transportation (7.9%)
 - Denial of sero-positive status (7.9%)
 - Preference for other centre (7.9%)
 - Distance (5.2%)
 - Trying other treatment (5.2%)

Association between co-habitation and same clinic attendance

| Living together | Positive partners same clinic attendance | | Chi-square | p-value |
|-----------------|--|----------|------------|--------------|
| | Yes (%) | No (%) | | |
| Yes | 28(60.9) | 18(39.1) | | |
| No | 23(53.5) | 20(46.5) | | |
| Total | 51(57.3) | 38(42.7) | 22.908 | 0.002 |

Discussion and conclusion

- Disclosure rate was higher than other African studies.^{6,7}
- Reasons for non-disclosure similar to study in East London.⁸
- Stigmatization experienced by PLHA also resulted in poor access to HIV care in Los Angeles, USA.⁹
- Fear of stigma remains an important factor influencing disclosure of retroviral status and couple attendance of antiretroviral clinics to access the much needed care and treatment.
- Couple-level prevention programs with emphasis on reducing stigma should thus be incorporated into HIV prevention strategies.

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Thanks for listening