

Extension Professionals' and Farmers' Perception of the Effect of HIV/AIDS Pandemic on Agricultural Activities in Southwestern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The study ascertains extension professionals' and farmers' perception of the effect of HIV/AIDS pandemic on agricultural activities in Southwestern Nigeria. Data were collected from 194 respondents comprising 59 Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) staff and 135 farmers through the use of questionnaire and structured interview schedule using a multi stage random sampling technique. Data were analysed using percentages, mean scores and t-test. The findings reveal that the major perceived effects of HIV/AIDS on agricultural activities by the respondents were loss of labour as a result of sickness and death ($x = 3.41; 3.77$) and reduction in the yield/productivity of crops ($x = 3.17; 3.42$). There was a significant difference ($t = -3.27, P < 0.05$) between the perception of extension professionals and farmers of the effect of HIV/AIDS on agricultural activities but there was no significant difference ($t = -0.251, P < 0.05$) between the perception of extension professionals and farmers on how best the spread of HIV/AIDS on agricultural activities could be minimized. The extension professionals and farmers opined that sensitizing individuals on the effect of HIV/AIDS on agricultural activities through the use of mass media and other traditional modes of communication aimed at changing the attitude and behaviour of the general populace will help to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS. The study therefore recommended that a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, through treatment and prevention efforts should be accelerated, simultaneously. HIV/AIDS prevention programme must address the contexts in which both the extension professionals and farmers live their lives.