

Awareness of HIV/AIDS Pandemic among Rural Farmers in Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT The paper assessed the awareness level of rural farmers about HIV/AIDS in Vandeikya Local Government Area of Benue State, Nigeria. Through simple random sampling, one hundred and sixty respondents were interviewed. Descriptive statistics and chi-square were used to analyze the data collected. Results of the study showed that majority (90.6%) of the respondents were aware of HIV/AIDS, while radio (71.3%) and friends/neighbors (54.4%) constitute the major sources of HIV/AIDS information. Despite the high level of awareness about HIV/AIDS, a reasonable proportion of the respondents ignorantly attributed its cause to poison (35.6%), witchcraft (32.5%), mosquito bite (27.5%) and eating/bathing/sleeping with infected individuals (20%). Chi-square analysis identified age, literacy level and frequency of travels of farmers to have had significant dependency relationship with awareness of HIV/AIDS. To reduce the rate of infection, it is recommended that government and non-governmental organizations should intensify more HIV/AIDS awareness campaign using radio, peer group, and agricultural extension agents. To be effective, awareness campaigns should take cognizance of factors like farmers' age and literacy level.