NAME: USIGBE DIVINE AIMIOSHO

DEPARTMENT: PHARMACY

MATRIC NO: 19/MHS11/146

COURSE: GST122

HIV/AIDS IN NIGERIA

The Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome otherwise called HIV/AIDS is undoubtedly a threatening disease in Nigeria despite the fact that some people believe it is just a myth meant to scare people from enjoying themselves in sexual acts. However, medical practitioners have confirmed that HIV/AIDS is actually very present in our country, Nigeria.

There are still some controversies about how AIDS developed and where it developed from. For some racial reasons, the whites have claimed that AIDS developed in Africa through a sexual union between a man and some other animals. Of course, Africans have denied this and strongly maintained that HIV/AIDS did not and in fact could never have developed in Africa. Their argument was based on the fact that the spread of HIV/AIDS was initially more rampant in the western world. The problem however is not where this virus developed from but how to stop its harmful effects in the human race.

HIV isn’t easily passed on from one person to another. The virus doesn’t spread through the air like cold and flu viruses. It can be transferred from one person to another through unprotected casual, oral and anal sex with an infected person, sharing needles, syringes and other injecting equipments with an infected person, blood transfusion from an infected person, sharing sex toys with an infected person, from mothers to babies during childbirth and breastfeeding, etc. Studies carried out in the country indicates that factors increasing the rate of HIV/AIDS in Nigerians include prostitution, many sexually transmitted diseases, high sexual intercourse among casual laborers, many cases of homosexuality, careless screening of blood and female trafficking international.

HIV/AIDS is a very big problem especially because of the number of lives which are being claimed by the menace. The effects are far reaching in Nigeria’s society; family, economy, places of work and the health sector.

The disease has put a burden on the health system. As the disease continue to progress, the attention needed to take care of the infected goes up and the limited health workers are strained. The staffs in hospitals has been reduced due to the death emanating from the disease and the workload has drastically increased. The provision of the same by hospital staff is becoming a problem in Nigeria due to the high number of victims.2

The social effects that come with the disease are equally far reaching. In Nigeria, people infected with the disease are side lined in the society thus the stigma is very high. In some cases where the victim dies and leaves children, the children are equally neglected leading to most of them becoming street children, armed robbers and thugs. In some situations, the children are resulted to be the family bread winners as the parents continue ailing with some dying. On the same note, Nigeria has the highest number of orphans due to HIV/AIDS. The relationship of the children of those dying of HIV with the rest from healthy families has continued getting worse due to mockery. This also results in poor academic performance with some even dropping out of school when the situation becomes unbearable.

The effects of HIV on the Nigerian household are notable, it goes without saying that the areas struck with poverty are the worst hit by the virus. Statistics show that households where grown ups have succumbed due to AIDS have higher chances of getting disband than those where no death has taken place. In Nigeria, it has been established that all those people who are earning are likely to have more mouths to feed if the number of parents dying from HIV to go by.

The effects of HIV in the Nigerian economy are far reaching if what studies indicate are anything to go by. The minimized labor due to sickness which reduces productivity on the young and energetic who can work affects the economy in the long run. In Nigeria, the income of the government has reduced owing to the menace [USAID]. When this happens, the authority increases tax and the pressure falls on the few who are working as they struggle to pay for the deficit realized. The HIV has also resulted in Nigeria being unable to attract foreign investors as a result of the level of risking lacking workers. This has added to the many that are jobless making the economy strain to sustain all of them. With no job, most people especially the women are forced to sell their bodies which in no way helps the situation. Most families have exhausted their savings and gotten themselves into bad debts all in an attempt to pay for their medical bills. When the situation gets worse, the family offers to sell their assets. The end result is total frustration as nothing much is achieved apart from the death of the victim.

There are some solutions that can aid our society in reducing and possibly eradicating this strenuous disease. The ministry of health has initiated some programs which are meant to sensitize the commercial sex workers and the young men on how to change their habits to reduce the spread of the disease in Nigeria. Through this method, an estimated 25% reduction of HIV in Nigeria is to be expected 5 years from now. Another solution is through the use of media to reach the people. This is very practical where the population of the country is very high. Movies can be made to illustrate the negativities of HIV and how to avoid it. Sending of texts through mobile phones with information on the epidemic can also go a long way.

With sex being said the main cause, people in Nigeria can be enrolled for sex education especially the young ones. This will enable many deals with misunderstanding surrounding the spread through sexual intercourse. Studies show that many young girls especially in the northern region of Nigeria are getting married without knowledge of HIV, thus risking their lives without knowing.

Condoms have also been identified as another solution of reducing chances of getting HIV/AIDS. Condoms should be promoted and made available in every state in Nigeria. People should also be encouraged to stick to one sexual partner.

Another solution is getting funds from institutions like the world bank. This will help the country to expand treatments and campaigns in prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Though there is no vaccine to treat HIV infection and no cure for AIDS, with the solution listed we can reduce it and with time totally eradicate it but this will only be possible if we all come together to cooperate for the good of our country, Nigeria.