

**Abstract**

**Original Paper**

**HIV Prevalence and Predictors among Sexually Active Nigerian Youths**

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**Background:** HIV/AIDS has played a significant role in reversing development in Africa and is a threat to the future of Africa. Young people are exposed to series of experimentation and risk factors that increase their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. Understanding the predictors of HIV infection among them is important for effective prevention intervention.

**Objective:** To examine the predictors and prevalence of HIV infection among sexually active youths in Nigeria.

**Methodology:** NARHS-2007, a national survey of men and women of reproductive age was used. A total of 2357 sexually active youth (15 – 24 years) were analysed to determine association between HIV serostatus, socio-demographic and sexual behavioural factors. Data was analysed using SPSS.

**Results:** The mean age of respondents was 20.4 years±2.5. Sixty-six percent were aged 20 – 24 years, about 60% were females, 9% attained tertiary education, 68.3% reside in rural areas and 45.6% were married. Male respondents reported higher condom use and multiple partners (64.5%, 68.8% respectively). HIV prevalence was 2.7%. HIV prevalence was 3.9% among respondents aged 20 – 24 years, 3.9% among females and 7.0% among respondents living with their sex partners. Divorced/separated/widowed respondents were less likely than those that were not married (OR=0.217, CI=0.075 – 0.624) to be infected.

**Conclusions:** Findings from this study revealed that marital status is a significant predictor of HIV infection and respondents engage in risky sexual behaviours. Hence appropriate and interventions that are youth friendly be implemented through effective behavioural change program. Young people are the future of every nation and the driving force behind national growth and development and this is only actualized if policies and programs are in place to enhance their skills, opportunities and participation in decision making.

**Keywords:** HIV, Youths, Sexuality