Perceived Influence of Polygamy and Extra-Marital Affairs on Transmission of HIV/AIDS in Benue State: Counselling Interventions

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ABSTRACT
This study investigated perceived influence of polygamy and extra-marital affairs on transmission of HIV/AIDS in Benue State and proffered counseling interventions. The study determined the extent to which polygamy and extra-marital affairs were perceived to influence HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area. Two research questions were answered and two statements of hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted the survey research design. Traditional rulers/council wards heads, traders, traditionalists, health workers, civil servants and farmers formed the population of the study. A total number of four hundred (400) adults were sampled from 4,253, 641 people using Taro-Yamèn’s formula. A multi stage sampling technique which included stratified sampling technique, purposive or judgmental sampling technique, simple random sampling technique were used at different stages in the study. A self developed questionnaire titled “Perceived Influence of Cultural Practices on HIV/AIDS Transmission Questionnaire (PICPHATQ)” was used for data collection. It contained twenty-one (21) items. Descriptive statistics involving mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while chi-square was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that polygamy and extra-marital affairs had significant influence on transmission of HIV/AIDS in the study area. The recommendation among others include mandatory HIV status test for parties involved in a polygamous marriage; polygamous inclination should be renounced, and public lecture or symposia to be organized to address extra-marital sexual relationships. It finally proffers counseling intervention strategies to slow the transmission of HIV/AIDS in Benue State.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, polygamy, extra-marital affairs and counselling.

INTRODUCTION
At different times in history, humanity has witnessed enormous challenges that have almost brought the world to complete extinction. Some of these disasters have been man-made (like war), while others have been natural (like earthquake and disease). In contemporary time, one of the devastating scourges is the problem of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS). Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a retrovirus that sets in motion the cause for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV is a virus which depletes the human immune system. This depletion is to the extent that sufferers cannot sustain or resist attacks of diseases; the attacks take their tolls uniformly on victims. It is at this point when the immune system is completely broken down, that AIDS appears since the body’s natural resistance to infection has been weakened. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is acquired, that is, no man is born with the immune depleting virus.
Although, an unborn baby can be infected with HIV virus in the mother’s womb, at birth or through breast milk from an infected mother. It is still a mode of HIV/AIDS transmission, in other words, it is a product of personal exertion virus. Unprotected sexual intercourse, use of sharp objects that can cause interchange of blood and seminal fluids have been identified as ways of contracting and spreading the virus. Kissing, mosquito bites, hugging, sleeping together, use of towel, cups, spoons and plates are not named among modes of transmission (Asogwa, 2012).

Presently there is still unforeseeable cure for HIV/AIDS. Hence, it is disheartening to note that the most affected age group between 25 – 34 years are the most physically active, and productive of all ages; because the individuals are at their prime ages, full of dreams and ideas, visions and strength. The implications of this fact are multi-dimensional and have effects on every facets of the Nigerian nation and Benue state in particular. It is devastating economically, socially and crippling in terms of physical, psychological and mental health. In this way no one is left unaffected and the spread of it is very alarming and dangerous.

Gausset (2001) argued that polygamy which is a sub-set of a complex set of social and economic relations is deeply ingrained in the culture of several African countries. Hence, this socio-cultural practice allows men to have more than one wife, thus placing both men and women at risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (Smith, 2010). This shows that where cultural practices of a society allows a man to have more than one wife and where manhood is often established through the amount of sexual pleasures a man enjoys from women, such act is likely to expose them to risky sexual behaviour which might later result into sexually transmitted infections such a HIV/AIDS.

Though, polygamy might have its positive side because, it is believed that it helps to reduce risky sexual behaviour of a man. However, the negative aspect would be the danger that once one of the wives or the husband is infected with HIV/AIDS or other STIs, it would lead to transmission of the disease to the rest of the individual who are parties in the polygamous set up.

Notwithstanding, Graham (2003) opined that the most common problem which faces the African people nowadays is the abuse of sex. The author further enumerated that many men in Africa promote polygamy as allowed by their culture. They can divorce the erring wives and marry other ones in their places at will, thereby expanding the quest to abuse sex. The situation has enabled the HIV/AIDS scorge to find its easy spread in many Africa homes. A study conducted by Kadiri, Ahmad and Mustaffa (2014) investigated HIV/AIDS and cultural practices in Nigeria: An implication for HIV/AIDS preventive communication campaign. One of the findings suggests that the man in a polygamous setting still engages in risky sexual behaviour which can militate against HIV/AIDS prevention in Nigeria. Scholars confirmed that polygamous status of a man has not been able to curb the extra-marital affairs in the society but it has led to an increase in transmission of HIV/AIDS (Azuonwu, Obire, Putheti & Ekene 2010, Owuamanam & Bankole, 2013).

Some researchers have found that extra-marital affairs contribute to transmission of HIV/AIDS. Hornby (2010) explained that extra-marital means happening outside marriage. It can be deduced that extra-marital affairs is any sexual relationship or activity outside the jurisdiction of marriage. Sithole (2003) explained that several African communities believe that sexual activity is related to social status and for males, an important expression for masculinity. In Nigeria, sexual activity by the male is viewed as an activity for fun and fame; if a man sleeps around, he is more popular while a woman that involves in similar nefarious acts is viewed in a derogatory way (Kadiri, Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2014).

Kadiri et al, (2014) opined that the prevalence of male prerogative and power gives them the liberty to be sexually disrespectful to their spouses. They stressed that culture curbs the sexual recklessness of women while man’s philandering is often tolerated thereby making the women to be susceptible to the contraction of the virus from men. According to Gbenda (2010) in small towns and villages, there is the understanding that a man is not supposed to have sexual intercourse with his wife or any of his wives during baby’s breastfeeding. This is to avoid the baby’s ailments and to guarantee full development for an average of one year. This means they should avoid having sex for relatively long period. However, it has been observed that men do seek other women outside for sexual gratification during this period.
Mah and Halperin (2008) observed that sex with multiple and concurrent partners in context of unsafe sex has been identified as behavioural driver of HIV in Southern Africa including south Africa. According to Landsman, Ginzburg and Weiss in Moyo and Miiller (2011) promiscuity, especially the total number of sexual partners is correlated with AIDS in both United States and Africa. In corroboration, Petros, Collins, Simbayi, Ramlagan, and Brown (2006) observed that whilst traditional polygamy has declined in many African societies, men in present day South Africa commonly engage in multiple and concurrent partnerships. This is done as much in the pursuit of social and individual validation as it is done in pursuit of reproductive success, as male virility is often measured by how many sexual partners one has at a given time.

Similarly, Ngulube in Moyo and Miiller (2011) noted that among the Ngoni and Tumba people of Zambia, if a man is impotent, special arrangements are made in secret for another man fisii (marriage-hyena) to produce children on his behalf. This secret arrangement for extra-marital affairs can be dangerous in every ramification with attendant HIV/AIDS transmission.

For smith (2007), marriage does not prevent a faithful married woman from contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections in Nigeria. He established that it is obligatory for a woman to remain faithful to her spouse despite the man’s unfaithfulness to the marital vows. In corroboration Smith (2010) identified that in the South – East part of Nigeria, a wife is expected to be faithful to her husband and devoted to her children no matter the situation she finds herself. Smith (2010) further stressed that the extra-marital affairs that men involve in have an important role to play in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Nigerian society. Cultures do not address the infidelity of men; it is only pungent on the infidelity of women. As a result, several married men engage in risky sexual behaviour that increases the prevalence of STIs and even HIV/AIDS. In the same vein, Onuoha (2000) noted that extra-marital affair is quite wide spread in Nigeria.

Obioha (2008) investigated exploring the cultural context of HIV/AIDS pandemic in Nigeria community: implication for culture specific prevention programmes in Taraba state. The result identified the risk behaviours that spread HIV to include permissive sex, lack of commitment to marriage by many, polygamy, unscreened blood transfusion and quack medical practice especially in Gassol L.G.A of Taraba state.

Counselling permeates all facets of the war against the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Counselling, in general, aims at helping people to develop understanding and insight into the nature of their problems and the causes and factors which produced them (Harper & Harper in Nwoye, 1991). There is need to identify and enlighten the people on the possible implications of polygamy and extra-marital affairs in the area of HIV/AIDS transmission. A lot has been done in quelling the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Benue state.

**Statement of the Problem**

The researchers observed that some behaviours and lifestyles may encourage the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Besides, some behaviours and lifestyles that may perpetuate the transmission of HIV/AIDS are still prevalence in the culture of Benue people. These behaviours and lifestyles include polygamy and extra-marital affairs. It should not be undermined that when a party in a polygamous set up contact HIV virus, there is possibility of spreading it to other in that relationship. Again, extra-marital affairs may be dangerous because people rarely conduct HIV test before engaging in sexual affairs; even when condoms are been used, they are not hundred percent safe.

Benue society need to be informed, sensitized, enlightened and counseled on the likely ways polygamy and extra-marital affairs may influence the transmission of HIV/AIDS. It would enable them to be cautious of likely implications of some lifestyles before imbibing on them, thus, the need for this study. Several studies have shown that the current cause of the epidemic is unlikely to change unless the people affected; and those at risk, make a concerted effort to adopt preventive measures (Erinosho, Isiugo-Abanihe Joseph, Dike & Adentino, 2012: Hasnain, 2005). Prevention of the HIV/AIDS epidemic thus depends on effecting change in behaviours and lifestyles to break the chain of transmission. The change in behaviour becomes more challenging for the reason that the forces that form and stimulate human behaviour that are injurious to health are very complex and poorly understood.
In essence, do polygamy and extra-marital affairs have any influence on the transmission of HIV/AIDS in Benue State? The focus of this study therefore is to investigate the extent to which polygamy and extra-marital affairs are perceived to influence HIV/AIDS transmission in Benue State. It is assumed that polygamy and extra-marital affairs might also likely have their own share of contribution to the spread and transmission of HIV/AIDS. It is on this note that the researchers set out to investigate the perceived influence of polygamy and extra-marital affairs on HIV/AIDS transmission in Benue state and the need for counselling interventions.

Objectives of the Study
The purpose of this study is to investigate perceived influence of polygamy and extra-marital affairs on HIV/AIDS transmission in Benue State. Specifically, this study aims at achieving the following objectives:

i. to determine the influence of polygamy on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area.

ii. to determine the influence of extra-marital affairs on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area.

Research Questions
The following research questions will guide the conduct of this study.

i. to what extent does polygamy influence HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area?

ii. to what extent does extra-marital affair influence HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area?

Statement of Hypotheses
The following research hypotheses were formulated for this study.

i. polygamy has no significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area.

ii. extra-marital affairs have no significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area.

METHODOLOGY
Survey design was adopted for this study. Four hundred (400) adults were sampled from 4, 253, 641 people using Taro Yamen’s formula. A multistage sampling was used to obtain the sample. In the first stage, stratified sampling technique was used to stratify the state based on the three (3) zones. Zone ‘A’ has three (3) L.G.A, zone ‘B’ has three (3) L.G.A and zone ‘C’ has four (4) L.G.A. A purposive or judgmental sampling technique was used in the second stage to select the local government areas to be studied. A total of ten (10) L.G.A were sampled out of the twenty three (23) L.G.A in Benue state. Ballot simple random sampling technique was used in the third stage to select 3 council wards from each of the selected local government areas.

A self developed structured questionnaire titled “Perceived Influence of Cultural Practices on HIV/AIDS Transmission Questionnaire” (PICPHATQ) was used for data collection. A total of twenty one (21) items were included in the questionnaire and were grouped into two sections. Section ‘A’ contains 9 items designed to elicit information the extent to which polygamy may expose the victims to contracting HIV/AIDS. Section ‘B’ consist of 12 items which were meant to elicit information from the respondents concerning the extent to which extra-marital affair was perceived to influence HIV/AIDS transmission. The instrument for data collection was validated by three experts from Measurement and Evaluation and Guidance and Counselling to obtain both face and content validity. To obtain the internal consistency of the study, the Cronbach Reliability Coefficient was used, which yielded on alpha of .785. The data collected for this study were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and Chi-square to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.
RESULTS
Descriptive Analysis
Research Question 1: To what extent does polygamy influence HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation rating of influence of polygamy on HIV/AIDS transmission.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Polygamous practices create high risk for HIV/AIDS infection because they involve multiple partners.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The tendency among Africans to perceive sex as mainly means of procreation which may promotes polygamy hence HIV/AIDS contraction.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Marrying more than one wife is to satisfy sexual desire by some men which can be prone to HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Polygamy is a show for wealth not health and may expose the parties involved to HIV/AIDS infection.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>When a woman does not bear children or male children it creates room for polygamous practice which may expose the parties involved to HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Polygamy is believed to reduce risky sexual behaviour of a man and could prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Polygamy gives a man the opportunity not to reconcile with his erring wife, rather to marry other wives and could increase chances of HIV/AIDS infection.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>An abandoned wife by the husband in the course of searching for food to make the ends meet may be exposed to risky sexual behaviour resulting to HIV/AIDS contraction.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Seeking for sexual gratification outside the matrimonial home may increase the chances of contracting HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster 3.23 0.82 High extent

The result in Table 1 shows that the extent of polygamy on HIV/AIDS transmission is high with the \( \bar{x} \) of 3.23 and S.D of 0.82. This is further reveal by each of the items used in this order: item one has mean of 3.51 and SD of .74, item two has a mean of 3.28 and SD of .73, item three has a mean of 3.28 and SD of .81, item four has a mean of 3.18 and SD of .80, item five has a mean of 3.33 and SD of .83. While item six has a mean of 2.95 and SD of 1.00, item seven has a mean of 3.20 and SD of .89 also item eight has a mean of 3.26 and SD of .85 and item nine has a mean of 3.41 and SD of .74.
Research Question 2: To what extent do extra-marital affairs influence HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of influence of extra-marital affairs on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Casual sex by men is culturally tolerated and this may increase the risk of HIV/AIDS transmission.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Cultural activities in our societies are at the heart of promoting, HIV/AIDS because they do not address extra marital activities by men.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Culture curbs the sexual recklessness of women and this can control HIV/AIDS transmission.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>During breastfeeding a child most of the men seek other women outside for sexual gratification and this is HIV/AIDS risk behaviour.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Marriage does not prevent an unfaithful wife or husband from contracting HIV if either of them engages in extramarital affairs.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sexual activity by men is viewed as one activity for fame and fun and this may lead to HIV transmission.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Culture is only careful on the infidelity of women as a result the transmission HIV may be difficult to control.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Several married people engage in risky sexual behaviour that increases the prevalence of sexual transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Having multiple sex partners could increase the chances of contracting HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>A man feels proud if he has multiple sex partners and this behaviour may increase the risk of HIV/AIDS contraction.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>There is no need having more than one sexual partner at one time because of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Both parties should be faithful to each other in marriage as this may help in slowing down the rate of HIV/AIDS transmission.</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>High extent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cluster mean: 3.35 0.81 High extent

The result in Table 2 reveals that the extent of extra-marital affairs on HIV/AIDS transmission is high with the x of 3.35 and S.D of 0.81. This is further reveal by each of the items used in this order: item one has mean of 3.52 and SD of .66 item, two has a mean of 3.23 and SD of .86, item three has a mean of 3.15 and SD of .87. Item four has a mean of 3.30 and SD of .84, item five has a mean of 3.40 and SD of .96 while item six has a mean of 3.36 and SD of 77, item seven has a mean of 3.19 and SD of .84. Furthermore, item eight has a mean of 3.35 and SD of .87 and item nine has a mean of 3.51 and SD of .69, item ten has a mean of 3.40 and SD of .76, item eleven has a mean of 3.37 and SD of .84 and item twelve has a mean of 3.44 and SD of .79.
Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Polygamy has no Significant Influence on HIV/AID Transmission in the Study Area

Table 3: Chi-square of Influence of Polygamy on HIV/AIDS Transmission in the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>( \chi^2_{\text{cal}} )</th>
<th>( \chi^2_{\text{tab}} )</th>
<th>Sig level</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>114**</td>
<td>36.415</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No valid Cases</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Significant result**)

Table 3 shows that \( \chi^2_{\text{cal}} (114) \) is greater than \( \chi^2_{\text{table}} (36.415) \) at 0.05 level of significance and df of 24. This implies that there is significant perceived influence of polygamy on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that polygamy has no significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Extra-Marital Affairs have no Significant Influence on HIV/AID Transmission in the Study Area

Table 4: Chi-Square of Influence of Extra-Marital Affairs on HIV/AIDS Transmission in the Study Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>( \chi^2_{\text{cal}} )</th>
<th>( \chi^2_{\text{tab}} )</th>
<th>Sig level</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-square</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>109**</td>
<td>36.415</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Valid Cases</td>
<td>400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Significant result**)

Table 4 reveals that \( \chi^2_{\text{cal}} (109) \) is greater than \( \chi^2_{\text{table}} (36.415) \) at 0.05 level of significance and df of 24. This implies that there is significant perceived influence of extra-marital affairs on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that extra-marital affairs have no significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the results, the following discussions were made:

Hypothesis I states that polygamy has no significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area. The chi-square test on hypothesis three showed that polygamy has significant influence on transmission of HIV/AIDS in the study area. The null hypothesis which states that polygamy has no significant influence on HIV/AIDS is rejected. The implication of this is that polygamy is one of the cultural practices which have led to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Benue state. Polygamy gives a man an opportunity to marry as many wives as possible. Women are not given such opportunity especially in Nigeria, including Benue state where polyandry is not practiced. Though, polygamy seems to curtail a promiscuous life, especially for the man. However, there is every tendency that when the man in question cannot satisfy any of his wives sexually; she would seek for it somewhere else. The culture allows a man to marry as many wives as he desires without considering the comfort of those women married to him. At times, a man with many wives leaves each of them to fend for herself and her children. The man might be callous about how each of his wives caters for her family. Any other man might cure the woman in question into extra-marital relationship which paves way to HIV infection. In addition, some of the men in a polygamous set are still playing infidelity with their spouses. Infidelity by either the man or the women might result to transmission of HIV/AIDS.

This finding supports Kadiri et al (2014) who stated that the negative aspect of polygamy would be the danger that once one of the wives or the husband is infected with HIV/AIDS or other STLs; it would lead to transmission of the disease to the rest of the individuals who are parties in a polygamous set up. This finding is consistent with Gbenda (2010), Onuoha (2002) and Graham (2003) who stressed that polygamy
is one of the major factors that have enabled the HIV/AIDS scourge to find easy spread in many Africa homes. The finding of this study also corroborated with Kadiri et al (2014) who revealed that polygamy tend to support an equally traditional promiscuous life for men in Nigeria. The study of Azuonwu, Obire, Putheiti and Ekene (2010) equally confirmed that the polygamous status of a man has not helped issues in the society but has instead led to increase and spread of the infection. Hypothesis 2 that stated that extra-marital affairs have no significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission in the study area was rejected. Table 4 showed the result of hypothesis that extra-marital affairs have significant influence on HIV/AIDS transmission. The result showed that extra-marital affairs was among the cultural practices that exposed those involved to HIV/AIDS infection. Extra-marital affairs hurt terribly when any of the spouses cheats on the other no matter what necessitated it. This act ushers in the family a degree of outrage and anger that can be overwhelming. It affects the mutual relationship of the spouses. Besides, extra-marital affairs craves for sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS transmission.

This result is similar to the study of Obioha (2008) who identified risk behaviours for HIV to grow rapidly to include permissive sex, lack of commitment to marriage by many in Gassol L.G.A of Taraba State. Also the finding is in line with Smith (2007) study which revealed that marriage does not prevent a faithful married woman from contacting HIV or other STLS in Nigeria. The study carried out by Nxumalo, Okeke and Mammen (2014) also found that Kushenda (having extra-marital relationship) had an influence on the spread of HIV/AIDS among Swazis. The finding of this study, also supports Mah and Halperin (2008) who observed that sex with multiple and concurrent partners in context of unsafe sex has been identified as behavioural driver of HIV in South Africa. Promiscuity, especially the total number of sexual partners is correlated with AIDS in both United States and Africa; as observed by Landsman, Ginzburg and Weiss in Moyo and Miiller (2011) is corroborated by the present finding. The assertion that extra-marital affairs have significant influence on the transmission of HIV/AIDS, supports Ngulube in Moyo and Miller who observed that special arrangements usually made in secret for another man, a Fisti (marriage hyena) to produce children on behalf of an impotent man encourages HIV/AIDS transmission.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that polygamy and extramarital affairs as cultural practices influence the transmission of HIV/AIDS in Benue state. The evil windblown by HIV/AIDS affects everybody and the society at large, thus, the need for effective counselling. Counselling is seen as the process of helping individuals to understand themselves and the world around them to make tangible and informed decisions that would change their lives positively. The guidance counsellor therefore, has a lot to contribute in helping people in a particular culture to make positive changes in their lives that would not encourage the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

The research proved beyond reasonable doubt that polygamy and extra-marital affairs under study are perceived to influence the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the study area. This has thrown light on the ongoing fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS in Benue State to recognize that these variables of investigation have their own quota in transmission of this HIV virus. Culture includes the symbolic and socially learned aspects of human society which is manifested through cultural practices. It affects how people interact. In other words, all the socially learned behaviours, beliefs, feelings, values and customs of a group normally affect their lifestyles and attitudes. Some cultural practices are not static. They can be modified through reorientation of the people on the possible ways these cultural practices may expose them to contraction of the deadly HIV/AIDS infection. For instance, anyone that indulges him/herself in extra-marital affairs may not have known the HIV status of the other person which spreads HIV infection rapidly.
COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1. Guidance counsellor is not a problem solver. Since counselling is a helping profession, the guidance counsellor as an expert in modifying the irrational beliefs, thoughts, ideas and decisions, may organize seminars, workshops and other public forum for re-orientation, sensitization, enlighten and educating the public against the negative influences of cultural practices like polygamy and how best to curb or modify them. This could be done through group counselling in the respective area to highlight the dangers of their practices to them as they relate to the spread of HIV virus.
2. The findings of this study also revealed that polygamy encourages the transmission of HIV/AIDS. The researcher recommends that the HIV status of the parties should be known. The virtue of fidelity should be imbibed by all the parties involved in a polygamous set up to eliminate the transmission of HIV/AIDS. People should also avoid little provocations or flimsy excuses to lead them into polygamous marriages.
3. The client-centred approach could be used by the counsellor in helping the client who may have learnt any negative behaviour as a result of cultural influences like extra-marital affairs. The counsellor should adopt the unconditional positive regard approach towards the client based on the reason that, behaviour learned can be unlearned through setting the desired behaviours and providing adequate learning processes that can aid the client to learn desired behaviour.
4. The researchers observe that extra marital affairs is a cankerworm that has eaten into the fabric of most marriages and society at large. The finding of the study has shown that extra-marital affairs give rise to transmission of HIV/AIDS. The researchers thereby recommend that there should be no partiality in handling extra-marital issues in the culture. This might slow the rate of transmission of HIV/AIDS. Public lectures/symposia should be carried out with emphasis on couples conduct, problems and sexual misbehavior by couples and danger inherent thereafter. Thus, sensitization of all and Sundry on behaviour modification towards married life.

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