

**We'll Show You You're A Woman":
Violence And Discrimination Against
HIV Positive Women in Nigeria: The
Case of Abia State**

ENWEREJI, E. E.

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

ABIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Abstract

- **Introduction**
- cultural practices have generated a lot of conflict among women,
- they are denied their husbands' property after their husbands' death.
- Study examined how cultural obligations promote violence and discriminations against HIV positive women.
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- Question is, to what extent are HIV/AIDS positive women allowed access to family resources in Nigeria?

Materials and method:

- Instruments used were questionnaire, focus group discussion and interview guides. A total sample of 98 HIV positive women was studied.
- Five key informants were interviewed to authenticate responses got from women.
- Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Results

- HIV positive women were faced with extensive discrimination and violence in their daily lives.
- 85(86.7%) were denied rights to family resources like land etc..
- they complained of lack of money to procure ART and food items.
- 79.6% of the women were aware of risks of unprotected sex,
- Yet 54(55%) of them practised it.
- Common reason proffered was money sex attracted for their upkeep.
- 59(60%) were ejected from their matrimonial homes for demanding their husbands' property.

TABLE 1: Marital Status of Respondents Ejected from their Families

Ejected from the family	Married	Single	Widowed	Total
Yes	7(7.1%)	4(4.1%)	48(49%)	59(60%)
No	13(13.3%)	10(10.2%)	16(16.3%)	39(40%)
Total	20(20.4%)	14(14.3%)	64(65.3%)	98(100%)

Reasons for Ejecting some Respondents

Reason	N=59 Frequency
For demanding husbands property	38(64.4%)
For refusing to be inherited	22(37.3%)
For being HIV positive	29(49.2%)
For asking for financial assistance	36(61%)
For not having male children	19(32.2%)
For being sickly	11(18.6%)
For refusing to have sex	20(33.9)

Respondents' residence and unprotected sexual activity

Ever used condom during sex	Respondents by location		
Response category	Urban	Rural	Total
Yes	11(11.2%)	9(9.2%)	20(20.4%)
No	17(17.3%)	37(37.8%)	54(55.1%)
Do not have sex	10(10.2%)	14(14.3%)	24(24.5%)
Total	38 (38.8%)	60(61.2%)	98(100%)

Table 4: Respondents' Perceived Risk of HIV Infection

Perceived risks	Respondents by frequency of response					Total
	Widows (not inherited)	Widows (inherited)	Married (cohabiting)	Married (not cohabiting)	Single	
Great risk	23(23.5%)	4(4.1%)	2(2%)	4(4.1%)	5(5.1%)	38(38.8%)
Moderate risk	12(12.2%)	2(2%)	3(3.1%)	3(3.1%)	2(2%)	22((22.4)
Low risk	5(5.1%)	7(7.1%)	1(1%)	2(2%)	3(3.1%)	18(18.4%)
No risk	8(8.2%)	3(3.1%)	2(2%)	2(2%)	4(4.1%)	20(20.4)
Total	48(49%)	16(16.3%)	8(8.2%)	12(12.2%)	14(14.3%)	98(100%)

reasons for taking this risk include

- male partners' dislike for condom use,
- inability to negotiate for condom use,
- un-affordability of condom,
- desire to have babies, and fear of losing financial assistance.

Discussion and conclusions:

- the number of women with children chased out of their matrimonial homes showed they had extensive discrimination and violence in their daily lives.
- Chasing HIV positive women with children out of their families and seizing their husbands' property are arguably domestic violence, which should be discouraged.
- the women's crave for money to meet the demands of HIV infection exposed them to unprotected sex giving concern for increased HIV infection

- this attitude calls for HIV seminar.
- Denying HIV positive women access to financial resources could have devastating effects on their economic empowerment and sexual life.
- this contributes to gender-based discrimination, pervasive marginalization and others. If the denial continues, governments' efforts (Federal, State and Local) in mitigating the impacts of HIV/AIDS would have no significant result.

- It is plausible to recommend that the government should outline and implement interventions capable of promoting HIV positive women's property and inheritance rights so as to enhance their empowerment and socio-economic advancement.
- can change social norms, local customs, and other practices that negatively influence decisions concerning women's rights to property transfers.

Conclusion:

- enlightenment seminars are needed to reduce the trends of violence on HIV positive women.

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