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**COST OF HEALTHCARE AND HEALTH STATUS: CASE STUDY OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)**

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INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS is a chronic disease but recent clinical advances have made HIV/AIDS a highly treatable disease. Appropriate medical care can prolong the lives of HIV infected individuals and prevent unnecessary and potentially costly complications. Initially, all the drugs and tests were free as funding for HIV and AIDS programme in Nigeria came from three main sources: public, external (international) and organized private sources. Presently, only a few of these services are gotten free of charge in the facilities and this has further worsened the economic condition of people living with HIV.

It is important to document the cost of accessing care for PLWHA in order to inform policy on measures to mitigate the effects. This study therefore covers total household out-of-pocket expenditure on HIV/ AIDS management, including payment for services and drugs.

METHODS:

Data was collected by interviewing 75 persons living with HIV/AIDS. They were selected through a systematic process from the list that come for follow up services in the clinic in UNTH. Most of the key sources of data were obtained from primary sources and secondary sources were used only where primary sources were not available.

RESULT:

Of the seventy five clients interviewed, 25 were male while 50 were female and all have been on HAART for upwards of 4 years. They attend 5-6 clinics annually. They spend between 300-900 naira($2-$6) per visit for transport to get to the clinic for those that live within Enugu and between 600-3000 naira($4-$20) for those that come from other states. Most of the clients opt for Caesarean section during antenatal care services and spend between 2,000-200,000 naira($14-$1,400) depending on where they get the services. The cost of breast milk substitute is between 1200-2400 naira ($8-$16)per tin of milk. They spend between 1300-2700 naira($7-$18) on a pack of immune boosters. CD4 estimation tests costs 5,000 naira($34) and 12,000 naira($80) for viral load count. For the purchase of opportunistic infection drugs, they spend between 2,000-2,800 naira($14-$19) for a pack of 10 tablets of Fluconazole and 450-1,000 naira ($3-$7) for 15mls of Nystatin. They spend about 5,000 naira ($34) on fruit intake per month to boost their immunity.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

The cost of care for PLWHA is high. To ensure universal access to healthcare for PLWHA, intervention programmes are needed to mitigate the effects of the high costs of management of PLWHA.