

28th International Conference on

PEDIATRIC NURSING & HEALTHCARE

September 04-05, 2017 | Edinburgh, Scotland

Proactive HIV testing among youth in South Florida

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Statement of the Problem: HIV infection continues to be a challenge to public health over three decades. A major driving source of this epidemic is HIV infection among youth. Youth currently account for over a fifth of new HIV infection in the United States, and experience poorer health outcomes compared to other age groups. In combating HIV infection among youth, HIV testing has been found to be a major tool for identifying those at risk or infected, counselling, and linking to care. However, youth have the lowest rate of HIV testing. This study explores the experiences of youth aged 18–24, who proactively tested for HIV infection in South Florida, using a qualitative descriptive method.

Method: Data was collected with a demographic questionnaire and through individual in-depth interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded and data collected only once from each participant. 25 participants (N=25) were recruited, enrolled and interviewed.

Findings: The youth in this study identified peer relationships, family support, privacy, and proximity of testing centers as facilitators to proactive HIV testing. Problems with confidentiality, stigma, cost, and not being offered testing by a healthcare professional were identified as barriers to proactive HIV testing.

Conclusion & Significance: The findings from this study will enable nurses create interventions both in clinical and community settings that will facilitate proactive HIV testing among youth. Furthermore, findings from this study will assist nurses in creating testing sites that encourage proactive HIV testing, and that are tailored to the needs of youth.

Biography

Oluwamuyiwa Winifred Adebayo is rounding up her dissertation at University of Miami, School of Nursing and Health Studies. She has worked at University of Miami with a faculty member on an NIH-R01 grant for a culturally tailored HIV prevention intervention among Hispanic women, an evaluation of Miami-Dade County Human Trafficking Collaborative Project, and created a measure for Community-Based Organization Engagement (CBOE). Her greatest aspiration is to be leader and researcher who will challenge the state of HIV/AIDS research positively.

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