

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF YOUTHS' PARTICIPATION IN HIV/AIDS COUNSELING AND TESTING (HCT) SERVICES IN ABIA STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The study compared youth's participation in HIV/AIDS Counselling and Testing (HCT) Programme in Urban and Rural Communities of Abia State, Nigeria. The objectives specifically described the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area and compared the level of participation in HIV/AIDS Counselling and Testing among the rural and urban respondents. A five-staged sampling technique was employed for data collection and statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages, charts and Z-statistic were used in generating the desired results. From the study, level of educational attainment was higher in the urban areas of Aba North and South Local Government Areas than the rural communities of Ohafia and Arochukwu Local Government Areas. Majority of the respondents were unmarried youths and students by occupation with a mean age of 22.95. On participation level, the result shows a general low level of participation. Risk perception, level of knowledge and occupation were significant at 5%, 10% and 1% respectively and negatively related to participation, while educational attainment of the respondents, distance to HCT centre, household sizes, level of awareness and occupation were significant at 5%, 10%, 5%, and 5% respectively and positively related to participation in HCT. There was significant difference in the levels of participation between the urban and rural respondents. The study therefore recommended an increase in the number of HCT centres in the State, especially at the rural areas, to increase access of this intervention to a larger population of youth. There should also be increased rural awareness campaign in the rural communities of Abia State, which must be followed by free HIV/AIDS Counselling and Testing sessions.

**Keywords:** HIV/AIDS; Youth; Participation; Counselling; Testing.