

Witchcraft Belief and HIV/AIDS in Edo State, Nigeria: Implications for Health-Care

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Abstract : The influence of witchcraft belief on disease causation, cure and public health system in Nigeria cannot be underrated. This paper investigated the nexus between witchcraft phenomenon and health-seeking behaviour of HIV sufferers in Edo state, Nigeria. Survey methodology was adopted and stratified random sampling technique was employed in the selection of 600 sample group spread into 200 HIV sufferers, 200 spiritual healers and 200 bio-medics from the three Senatorial districts of the state. Data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire and in-dept interview and analyzed using simple percentage and frequency. Major findings were: belief in witchcraft significantly influenced the people's perception of HIV causation and wellness and this impacted adversely on public health-care. Poverty, ignorance and dearth of retroviral drugs enhanced the people's recourse to spiritual healers. Collaboration between spiritual healing techniques and biomedicine was recommended as panacea for curbing HIV/AIDS related morbidity and mortality. It concluded that socio-economic problems must be addressed while the importance of integrating the values of spiritual healing into biomedicine cannot be overstressed.

Keywords : biomedicine, health care, HIV/AIDS, spirituality, witchcraft

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