



The Impact of HIV & AIDS on the Academic Performance of Students in Ethiope East Local Government Area of Delta State

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Since the first case was diagnosed in 1984, HIV and AIDS have continued to have devastating effects on economic growth, human development and education fraternity. This is because people who are infected lack the energy to work. Health care workers and teachers are dying at a very high rate and this paralyzes the educational sector and consequently affects academic performance. This study focused on impact of HIV&AIDS on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. Four research questions were employed in this study. The population of study is made up of all the 8 (eight) senior secondary school's students in public secondary schools in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was research designed questionnaire. The instrument was validated by two experts while an overall reliability co-efficient of 0.72 is an indication that the instrument is reliable. The data collected from the study was analyzed using simple percentages and weighted mean. The finding shows that discriminatory attitude, poor social interaction, absenteeism, truancy and poor monitoring by school administration are the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. The study further showed that depressive disorder, decreased social functioning, increased difficulty managing his or her HIV diagnosis, lends a patient to experience burnout, feeling depressed and isolated, frustration with the medication regimen is extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria. Based on findings it was recommended amongst others that relevant authorities and schools should organize workshops to enlighten the people on the need for accommodating students living with HIV and AIDS.

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Academic Performance; Diseases; Students; Ethiope East Local Government Area

Introduction

Globally, Human Immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) is the second most common cause of death among the youth. It is estimated that in 2007, there were 2 million people under 15 years living with HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS, 2007). AIDS is the advanced stage of HIV infection (Centre for Disease Control, 1982). The latter destroys the immune system and when the system becomes unable to protect the body against common and otherwise unthreatening diseases, AIDS may be diagnosed. AIDS is a serious condition in which the body's defense against some illnesses is broken down. This means that people with AIDS can get many different kinds of diseases which a healthy person's body would normally fight quite easily (UNAIDS, 2009). As a result, more hours may be spent out of class due to illnesses thus leading to poor academic performance. The age group 15-19 years old constitutes 35 per cent of all AIDS cases and an estimated 41,000 youth had contracted AIDS by the year 2000 (UNAIDS, 2000). This age bracket is found in secondary schools and even universities. HIV and AIDS have been rated among the leading contemporary problems especially among the youth. According to a study carried out by the population council (2003), 66% of adolescent HIV cases are in relationships with the opposite sex, while 61% are sexually active and have low contraceptive use and 43% think they have a "good" to "moderate" chance of getting the disease because they have multiple sex partners. Reproductive Health services especially for young people infected with HIV and AIDS represented additional sources of discrimination as health providers might not respect their right to intimacy and love (Arvidson, 2006). According to the District Development Plan (DDP, 2002), the prevalence of HIV and AIDS scourge in Nigeria stood at 21 per cent in 2001, having risen from 14.8 per cent in 1996. For a variety of reasons such as under recognition, under diagnosis and under reporting, the actual number probably exceeds what is in the records.

The belief in witchcraft which is engraved in most Nigerian culture militates against people seeking medical attention. Learners in schools have their lives and subsequent behavior coined around their cultural practices. Many cultural practices reveal various social dilemmas which need careful thought and serious attention in an attempt to resolve them as well as in the formulation of policies on the management and control of HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS 2001). Bandura (1986) argues that it is people's beliefs about the world around them that have the most influence on their actions. In some cultures, socialized practices of female genital mutilation, early marriages and nomadic way of life which, does not encourage permanent secure home encourages the spread of the disease (DDP, 2008). The learners that are affected and infected by HIV and AIDS live within this community whose practices have a great influence on their behavior.

Heterosexual sex remains the primary mode of transmission for HIV (Dibua, 2009), and accounts for 80-95% of HIV infections in Nigeria. According to the Federal Ministry of Health, high-risk groups significantly contributed to new HIV infections. The high-risk groups are about 1% of the general population, and are men that have sex with men, female sex workers and injecting drug users. They contributed almost 23% of new infections. Also, the high-risk groups and their partners contributed 40% of new infections. However, people practicing low-risk sex (clandestine sex) in the general population contribute 42% of the infections due to low condom use and high sexual networking (FMH, 2007). Furthermore, long distance truck drivers and traders who spend several days away from their homes and families and who engage the services of commercial sex workers or mistresses (Dibua, 2010), are also identified as important channels in the HIV distribution saga. Evidence of the enormous contribution of sex working (in its diverse forms) to HIV dissemination abound following the index screening of sex workers in 1988-1989 in Lagos State. Federal Ministry of Health (FMH, 1999), reported an increase from 2 -15% HIV prevalence among this group in 1993. This figure has escalated. Currently, HIV seroprevalence among prostitutes ranges from 18 - 51.8% with a national average of 22.9%.

Nevertheless, the identification of the illness in the home, brings the issue of stigmatization in the community and marginalization in the school and poses a very real barrier to access and participation in education process (Global Report, 2010). The report states that while levels of awareness of HIV and AIDS are patently high, so too are levels of suspicion and fear. Thus, a student coming from a home in which infection is perceived to be HIV linked, may be stigmatized or even physically deterred from entry to school by his & her peers, or simply too traumatized by the reactions that they themselves opt to stay away. In addition, due to economic hardship, most parents are not able to provide requirements for their young daughters and sons demanded by them due to social and peer pressure as this is above their means. The inability of parents to provide such requirements has made young girls to opt for much older and financially secure men (Erulkar, 1999). With the advent of HIV and AIDS, the ultimate price such girls pay for this reward is their lives (Merger and Sunanda, 1993). A woman living in poverty is more vulnerable to HIV infection, less likely to be able to negotiate safe sex and does not have access to antiretroviral drugs and other

treatment. She will therefore become sick and die sooner than a woman who can afford treatment. The HIV positive child and his & her siblings in the impoverished family will then be orphaned and plunge into deeper poverty (Desmond & Gow, 2002). Most of the families are poor and headed by mothers or children as a result of either banditry or HIV scourge; they are barely able to raise enough money for fees and other basic requirements leave alone providing for the special needs of the HIV positive students (District Development Plan 2002). Desmond (2002), the reliance on grandparents to provide care after the death of parents is dangerous and will become increasingly so as the epidemic progresses. When the grandparents die, these children end up being orphaned again. The question of who will care for them remains unanswered.

According to the report by Global report (2010), HIV and AIDS affect academic performance through increased learner psychological stress, morbidity, sickness, absenteeism, school environment and mortality. Because of the above over-arching impacts on the academic performance, HIV and AIDS is, by far, the most compelling exogenous threat to attainment of Goal number two of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; Education-for -All by 2015." (Kiara 2007). Recent studies have shown that HIV and AIDS have a direct negative impact on the learners in schools. The learning activities are continually interrupted by sickness, repeated occasions of grief and mourning in the community, widespread sense of insecurity and anxiety among learners. This contributes to high drops – out rates of pupils thus leading to a greater difficulty in increasing school enrollment, completion rates and overall learning outcomes.

However, academic performance is defined by Levine, (2009) as a measure of how well a student meets standards set out by local government and the institution itself in academic circles. This is further elaborated by Amato (2010) saying that, it is a term used for students based on how well they are doing in their studies and classes. In other words, academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given during or at the end of their studies. This is to say that, it is indeed the outcome of education, that is, the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals.

Many students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area, however, do not persist in the learning process. Many of them drop out and others absent but they do not want to be stigmatized or isolated. The apathy of these students appears to be rooted in the culture of the people. Surprisingly, some of these students are from very poor homes. In addition, many students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area lack the economic and financial powers to cater for themselves. They may be aware of the government services to assist them but would not benefit from them due to severity of HIV and AIDS disease. Therefore, this study is set to ascertain the impact of HIV&AIDS on the academic performance of students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State through the following questions:

- I. To what extent does school environment impact on the academic performance of students living with HIV and AIDS in Ethiopia East Local Government Area?
- II. To what extent does dropping out from school affect the academic performance of students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area?
- III. To what extent does psychological stress impact on the academic performance of students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area?

Theoretical Framework

Ecological Systems Theory is used as the theoretical framework. Ecological Systems Theory coined by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005). Bronfenbrenner, a well-known and a very influential psychologist developed his path breaking. Ecological Systems Theory which impacted on the education of the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of society like children from the Child Headed Families (CHF) (Scheier, Carver & Gibbons 1979). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory holds that, development is influenced by several environmental systems (Mishra, Arnold, Otieno, Cross, and Hong, 2007). He went on to identify the environmental systems which are very important in the development and education of children. Bronfenbrenner's (1917-2005) micro-system includes any immediate environment that the child lives in, for instance, the family, peers, school and neighborhood. How these groups or organizations interact with the child will have an effect on how the child grows and in turn their academic performance at school. According to Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) cited by Vander, Zanden & Cardwell (2007) the more nurturing these relationships and places are, the better the child will be able to grow and the good the academic performance at school. Beck (2007) elaborates Bronfenbrenner's second level, the meso-system saying it describes how the different parts of the child's micro-system work together. When the relationship between different Microsystems is a compatible one, development of the child progresses more smoothly. When role expectations are similar in both settings, for example, do your own work, be on time, do your homework and

so on, children are expected to perform better than if the role expectations differ substantially from one setting to the next. In CHF, role expectations are totally different since children have no option other than assuming adult roles at a tender age (Beck, 2007).

The ecosystem level as given by Best and Khan (2006)) includes the other people and places the child may not interact with often but has a large effect on her, for example, the extended family members and the neighborhood. How the extended family treats children from the CHF have a bearing on their academic performance. The last of his levels as given by Paquette and Ryan (2001), is the macro-system which is the largest and most remote set of people and things to the children but which still has a great influence over them. The macro-system includes cultural values, the economy and wars as well as diseases like HIV and AIDS which sweep the loving and caring parents. All these have some negative impacts on life and education of students.

Review of Empirical Studies

Khan, Fatima, Afridi, Malhotra & Jha, (2011) investigated awareness regarding HIV/AIDS among college students in Khyber Pakhtun Khwa, utilized cross sectional method in two colleges of Peshawar. The population of the study consisted of sixty (60) students in two colleges (public and private). Results of the study indicated that 60% of the students from the public college and 70% from the private college knew that a person appearing to be healthy might have been infected with HIV. Both public and private college students were aware that HIV/AIDS has no curative treatment. 35% public students and 40% private regarded use of condoms as preventive measure.

Omeonu & Kollie (2010) studied knowledge and attitude of Babcock University students on risk behaviors of HIV/AIDS. The aim of the study was to identify the level of knowledge and the kind of attitude that level 100 students (freshmen) at Babcock University upheld towards risk behaviors that encourage the spread of HIV/AIDS. In addition, the study sorts to identify the difference in awareness level of male and female students in the spread of HIV/AIDS. A descriptive survey design was utilized with a sample population of 206 respondents. Finding of the study revealed that: (1) Babcock male and female student have adequate knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS. It was reported that Babcock students have no positive attitude towards risk behavior that spread HIV/AIDS. That is to say that the students showed neither positive nor negative attitude towards risk behaviors that transmit HIV.

Egbezor and Echendu (2012) investigated the impact of HIV/AIDS education programmes on sexual behavior of female students in Nigeria schools. The study utilized 200 female students, and reported the following results:

- I. Female students in urban schools seem to be more conscious of HIV/AIDS infection and appear to modify their sexual behavior towards avoiding HIV infection.
- II. In the urban schools, mean rating for female students deciding to delay sex until marriage is 2.44 and 2.10 for rural female students.
- III. The mean rating for female students insisting on their male partner using condom is 2.65.
- IV. In urban schools, the mean rating for female students urge to have multiple sex partners is 2.37, while for rural schools is 2.65.
- V. The mean rating for female students willing to go for HIV test is 3.73 for urban schools and 2.60 for rural schools.
- VI. Female students in urban schools mean rating for resisting the pressure for unprotected sex is 2.67 and 3.26 for rural schools (P.104).

Ojo (2011) determined HIV/AIDS knowledge and risk behavior of fresh undergraduates of a tertiary institution in Ekiti-State, Nigeria. The study utilized a sample population of 433 students of which 207 are males, while 226 are females. Awareness of HIV/AIDS questionnaire (AHQ) was used. The result indicated that there was no significant gender main effect of gender difference in the knowledge of undergraduates on the risk behavior of HIV/AIDS pandemic. Also, the study revealed that the level of knowledge of HIV/AIDS for both sexes was equal. Alued, Imhonde, Maliki, & Alutu (2005) conducted a study assessing Nigerian University students' knowledge about HIV/AIDS, using a total of 900 undergraduates of Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Nigeria. The research subjects consisted of 520 male students and 380 female students. Both male and female students were within the age bracket of 18 years and 40 years. The results of the study revealed that: Nigerian university students have high knowledge about HIV/AIDS. There was a significant difference between male and female students in their knowledge about HIV/AIDS (male students, $M = 94.64$, while female students, $M = 78.82$). There was no significant difference in the knowledge and awareness level of

HIV/AIDS; and married and single students (married students, $M = 81.32$, single students, 80.89). Significant difference existed between Adolescents and Adults in their knowledge about HIV/AIDS. Adolescent ($M = 96.72$, higher than Adults, $M = 79.51$) ($p.211$).

Arogundade (2012) ascertained HIV/AIDS awareness as a predictor of university students' dating behavior in South-West Nigeria. The researchers carried out a cross-sectional design with a sample population size of (1600, $M=800$ and $F=800$) undergraduates in age range 16 to 30 years old. The "Awareness/Attitude to AIDS Scale" (AAS) and the "Dating Behavior Questionnaire (DBQ) were used to collect data for analysis. Results showed that: there is a significant difference in undergraduates dating behavior on the basis of their knowledge of the occurrence and prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Where $t=4.82$, $df1191$, $P<0.05$. There is a significant difference in undergraduate dating behavior on the basis of their awareness of mode of contracting of HIV/AIDS. Where $t=2.09$, $P<0.05$. There is no significant difference in undergraduates dating behavior on the basis of their awareness of the effects and consequences of HIV/AIDS; where $t = 1.38$, $P>0.05$ ($p.11$).

Chang, Eke-Huber, Eaddy & Collins (2005) conducted a study on Nigerian college students on HIV knowledge and perceived risk sexual behavior among 370 undergraduate students. Sample for the study was collected from three universities, namely: University of Benin-Edo State, Federal University of Technology Owerri Imo State, and University of Uyo Akwabong. Percentage population sample 18%, 17% and 20% respectively. The results of the study revealed that: HIV knowledge scale indicated that female students showed (mean = 15.49 than males (mean = 14.52). The risk of HIV transmission through oral sex is higher among female students (mean = .73) than males (mean = .60).

Caldeira, Singer, O'Grady, Incenti, & Arria (2012) investigated HIV testing in recent unmarried college students in USA for prevalence and correlates. The study was longitudinal, consisting 1253 fresh students ages 17 to 19 years. One thousand and three students completed all self-administration items on HIV testing and sexual activity. The final analytic sample was 95 individuals. Results showed that: nearly half the sample ($n=455$, 47%) had been previously tested for HIV at least once in their life. Correlates of HIV Testing was significantly related to gender race/ethnically, sexual orientation, lifetime, and recent same-sex and opposite sex activity. Significant race/ethnicity differences were observed for sexual behavior Neighborhood income was the only variable tested that was related to HIV testing Alcohol and other drug (AOD) dependence on HIV were more strongly associated with HIV testing in women than men.

Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive survey research method for the collection of relevant data for the study. The population of study is made up of all the 8 (eight) senior secondary school's students in public secondary schools in Ethiopie East Local Government area of Delta State. A sample of 310 respondents was used for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample for the study. The major instrument that was used for data collection is the questionnaire, which was designed and constructed by the researcher. The researcher carried out a pilot test on 25 students in Ethiopie West Local Government. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation statistics

Findings

Research Question One

To what extent has school environment impacted on academic performance of students?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent School Environment Impacted on Academic Performance of Students

| <i>s/n</i> | <i>Items</i> | \bar{X} | <i>Std. Dev</i> | <i>Decision</i> |
|------------|---|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Students with HIV & AIDS are being discriminated against | 3.29 | .75 | Agreed |
| 2 | Students with HIV & AIDS face difficulties in buying school stationery and other materials. | 3.34 | .79 | Agreed |
| 3 | Students with HIV & AIDS are characterized by distress in school | 3.33 | .80 | Agreed |
| 4 | Students with HIV & AIDS face challenges in relationships | 3.26 | .83 | Agreed |
| 5 | Students with HIV & AIDS face challenge of grade progression | 3.31 | .84 | Agreed |
| | Total | 3.35 | .49 | |

N= 310; criterion mean = 2.50

The table 1 shows the, mean and standard deviation of extent school environment impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East. The result revealed that the respondents agreed to items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, as the extent school environment impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East. This is because the mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. Nonetheless, the overall result showed that respondents accepted all the items as the extent school environment impact on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East. This implies that students with HIV & AIDS are being discriminated against, students with HIV & AIDS face difficulties in buying school stationery and other materials, students with HIV & AIDS are characterized by distress in school, students with HIV & AIDS face challenges in relationships, and students with HIV & AIDS face challenge of grade progression.

Research Question Two

To what extent is dropping out of school impacted on academic performance of students?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Extent Dropping Out of School Has Impacted on Academic Performance of Students.

| <i>s/n</i> | <i>Items</i> | \bar{X} | <i>Std. Dev</i> | <i>Decision</i> |
|------------|--|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 6 | Discriminatory attitude | 3.20 | .83 | Agreed |
| 7 | Poor social interaction | 3.4 | .71 | Agreed |
| 8 | Absenteeism | 3.3 | .75 | Agreed |
| 9 | Truancy | 1.9 | 1.18 | Rejected |
| 10 | Poor monitoring by school administration | 2.0 | 1.2 | Rejected |
| | Total | 2.7 | .52 | |

N= 310; criterion mean = 2.50

The table 2 shows the means and standard deviation of the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East LGA. The result revealed that the respondents agreed to items 6, 7, 8, as being the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East LGA with the mean scores of (SA) 3.20, (SA) 3.4, (SA) and 3.3, respectively; but disagreed with items 9 and 10 with the mean score of (SD) 1.9, and (SD) 2.0 respectively. The overall mean value of 2.7 shows that is the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East LGA. This implies that discriminatory attitude, poor social interaction, absenteeism, truancy and poor monitoring by school administration are the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiopie East LGA

Research Question Three

To what extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiopie East LGA?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation of Extent Has Psychological Stress Impacted on the Academic Performance of Students in Ethiope East LGA

| <i>s/n</i> | <i>Items</i> | \bar{X} | <i>Std.Dev</i> | <i>Decision</i> |
|------------|--|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| 13 | Depressive disorder | 3.2 | .78 | Agreed |
| 14 | Decreased social functioning | 3.2 | .79 | Agreed |
| 15 | Increased difficulty managing his or her HIV diagnosis | 3.2 | .97 | Agreed |
| 16 | Lends a patient to experience burnout | 3.2 | .84 | Agreed |
| 17 | Feeling depressed and isolated | 3.1 | .77 | Agreed |
| 18 | Frustration with the medication regimen | 3.0 | .92 | Agreed |
| | Total | 2.75 | .57 | |

N= 310; criterion mean = 2.50

The table 3 shows the means and standard deviation of extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East LGA. The result revealed that the respondents agreed to whole items, as being the extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East LGA with the mean scores of 3.2, 3.2, 3.2, 3.2, 3.1 and 3.0 respectively. The overall result value of 2.75 showed that the respondents accepted that the whole items are extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East LGA. This implies that depressive disorder, decreased social functioning, increased difficulty managing his or her HIV diagnosis, lends a patient to experience burnout, feeling depressed and isolated, frustration with the medication regimen is extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East LGA

Discussions of Results

The discussion was done following the sequence of the research questions. The first question sought to ascertain extent has school environment impacted on academic performance of students? Students with HIV & AIDS are being discriminated against, students with HIV & AIDS face difficulties in buying school stationery and other materials, students with HIV & AIDS are characterized by distress in school, students with HIV & AIDS face challenges in relationships, and students with HIV & AIDS face challenge of grade progression. The finding is in line with Niang and Van Ufford, (2007) who found in their study in Senegal that, children from affected families reportedly frequently missed class due to involvement in domestic duties, obtained poor results, and faced difficulties in buying school stationery and other materials. The challenges faced by affected children can contribute to a school environment characterized by distress, anxiety, confusion and lower teaching efficiency (Coombe, 2007).

The second research question sought to ascertain the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students. Discriminatory attitude, poor social interaction, absenteeism, truancy and poor monitoring by school administration are the extent dropping out of school has impacted on academic performance of students in Ethiope East LGA. This finding is in line with Inuwa and Yusuf (2013) and Park, (2007) who found that students' personal withdrawal, or indirectly influenced to withdraw, in other case student is either pushed out or pull-out. However, the actions of students to stop school or dropout are influenced by stated school culture and other school related cultures. School dropout is unconventional decision by students to stop going to school. This is a dysfunctional act or unexpected and unwanted school conclusion by individual students or group of students (Wils & Ingram, 2011; Inuwa and Yusuf 2013).

The third research question sought to identify extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students in Ethiope East LGA? Depressive disorder, decreased social functioning, increased difficulty managing his or her HIV diagnosis, lends a patient to experience burnout, feeling depressed and isolated, frustration with the medication regimen is extent has psychological stress impacted on the academic performance of students. This finding is in line with Monasch & Boerma (2004), children living with HIV may have decreased social functioning in comparison with their peers. This decline in social functioning or peer relations may signify the child's increased difficulty managing his or her HIV diagnosis and & or treatment regimen. This decline may be more apparent as the child grows older and the significance of his or her HIV infection changes with relation to developmental stage.

Conclusion

From the analysis of the data carried out in the study, school environment impact on academic performance of students in Ethiopia East include: students with HIV & AIDS are being discriminated against, students with HIV & AIDS face difficulties in buying school stationery and other materials, students with HIV & AIDS are characterized by distress in school, students with HIV & AIDS face challenges in relationships, and students with HIV & AIDS face challenge of grade progression.

Recommendation

From the findings of this research work, some recommendations can be made on the impact of HIV&AIDS on the academic performance of students in Ethiopia East Local Government Area of Delta State. These Recommendations include:

- I. Counselling being an integral part of the present system of education should be encouraged. It should be ensured that guidance and counseling services be encouraged to start at the primary school to tertiary institutions.
- II. In a bid to prevent students with HIV & AIDS being discriminated against relevant authorities and schools should organize workshops to enlighten the people on the need for accommodating students living with HIV and AIDS
- III. Extended family responsibilities should be encouraged by the government, civil society and other stake holders especially through traditional leaders to tackle the discriminatory attitude and poor social interaction against people living with HIV and AIDS

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