

Does Travel Distance Matter? A Comparative Analysis of the Sexual and HIV Preventive Practices of Long-Distance Drivers and Intra-City Drivers in Nigeria

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Summary

The main objective of this paper was to investigate if there are significant differences in the sexual and HIV preventive behaviours of long distance drivers and intra-city drivers in Nigeria. A multi stage random design procedure was used to select 529 drivers in 12 cities. The two groups of riders were compared on four risky sexual behaviour indicators over the twelve month period before the survey. Using the t-test, there were no significant differences between the two groups of drivers on all indicators: number of girlfriends; number of sex workers, number of casual partners; and overall number of non-marital partners. The chi-square test showed no difference between the two groups of drivers on the use of condom at last risky sex. Given that there is no differential between the two groups of drivers in terms of sexual behavior, HIV programmers working with drivers may need to concentrate on both groups of drivers.

Introduction

Long distance drivers (LDDs) in Africa have often been considered to be one of the most at risk populations in terms of HIV infection. In Nigeria, the near collapse of the railway system has made road haulage the main mode of transporting both goods and passengers throughout the country. The size of the country and the poor state of major inter-state roads demands that drivers spend long periods away from home while on business. Separated from home for a number of days every

month and with comparatively higher levels of disposable income than the general population, LDDs do have non-marital sexual partners (including sex workers) mainly along the transport routes. Experience of STIs is common. Targeting LDDs is essential as they are likely to transmit HIV from high-risk behaviour to their partners at home thereby constituting a bridge between the FSWs and their other partners (PSRHH, 2004). But are the risky behaviours restricted only to LDDs? Why are interventions only limited to long distance drivers? What has not been explored in any detail are the risk levels in terms of behaviour of other transport workers in Nigeria. These include intra-city taxi and bus drivers as well as commercial motor cycle drivers (popularly called *okada*). The main objective of this paper is to investigate if there are significant differences in the sexual and HIV risk-taking behaviour of inter city and intra city drivers in Nigeria.

Methods and Materials

The study was conducted in 26 communities in December 2002 where HIV related high risk behaviour was prevalent in 12 cities in 13 states of Nigeria. Among the study respondents were transport workers, female sex workers, the youth, and other residents of the communities. This paper is based on a sub-analysis of 529 drivers who formed part of the large study.

A multi-stage probability sampling procedure was adopted. Within each study area (i.e. community), all elements at each stage of selection had an equal probability of being included in the sample. The sampling fraction for each study area was dependent on the population of eligible persons in the study area. The final return sample for analysis was 5653 from which a sub-sample of 529 transport workers was analysed. To ensure that all categories of persons were captured in the sample, the population was divided into two: "permanent" members and "transient" population. For people characterised as permanent; all structures (buildings) within the study area were identified and based on household listing the proportionate number was determined and interviewed. For the transient persons e.g. transport workers and market women who may not necessarily reside in the community, physical count was taken at peak of business in the community. The sample was distributed proportionately to the estimated size of each category of respondents.

Results

Characteristics of respondents

Demographic characteristics presented here include occupation of respondents, their location in terms of urban or rural, northern or south-

Table 1 Frequency of survey sample

	Percent	Frequency
Long Distance Driver (Truck/trailer)	25	133
Long Distance Driver (Bus)	27	144
Okada (Motor-Cycle) Rider	27	143
Intra-City Commercial Bus/ Taxi Drivers	21	109
Total	100	529

ern region, age, educational levels, marital status, religion and tribe. These variables and others on their life style were used to explain some of the findings.

Table 1 presents the type of transport workers in the sample. On the whole the transport workers were fairly evenly spread. Majority (46%) of the respondents were in the 25-34 years age bracket, followed by those in the 35 years and above age group (40%). About half of them had primary or no education, while the other half had secondary or higher education with majority of them in the Okada drivers (59%). More than half (60%) were married while 40% were unmarried. In terms of region, Muslims formed 45% and Christians 53%.

The different types of transport workers were compared on several knowledge and behavioural indicators. The results are shown in table 2. Using the chi-square test, it is clear that on all the indicators compared, including condom use at last sex and number of partners, there were no significant differences between long distance drivers and intra city drivers.

The two groups of drivers were also compared on four risky sexual behaviour indicators over the twelve month period before the survey. Using the t-test, there were no significant differences between the two groups of drivers on two indicators: number of non-marital partners, and number of new partners in the four weeks preceding the survey (See Table 3).

Conclusions

Given that there is no differential between long distance drivers and intra city drivers in terms of HIV prevention knowledge and sexual behavior, HIV programmers working with drivers may need to concentrate on both groups of drivers, instead of focusing mainly on long distance drivers. Both stay away from home, and more importantly have

Table 2 Comparison of Long distance drivers with Intra-city drivers on key HIV Knowledge and Behavioural indicators

	Long distance drivers %	Intra-city drivers %	p value
Spontaneous knowledge of UNAIDS HIV prevention indicator*	29.2	31.3	0.268
Condoms protect against HIV	72.2	75.4	0.574
Have heard of AIDS	95.7	97.2	0.159
Know any one infected or who died of AIDS	29.2	33.3	0.298
Healthy looking person can be HIV positive	81.2	86.5	0.100
Ever heard of condom	96.4	98.4	0.239
Used condom last sex act with Non-marital Partner	55.3	55.6	0.967
Had 2 or more non marital partners in the last 12 months	20.9	24.0	0.719
Had 2 or more new non marital partners in the last 4 weeks.	9.4	8.0	0.928
Had STIs past 12 months	5.1	8.3	0.130

access to disposable income and are based at motor parks close to high risk areas.

Table 3 T test scores for key sexual behaviour indicators

	t	df	p value
Number of non marital partners	0.359	441	0.719
Number of new partners last one week	0.090	444	0.928

References

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