

DATA ANALYSIS FOR IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN LAGOS STATE: ACCESS TO ANTIRETROVIRAL (ARV) DRUGS.

People living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria face several challenges on a daily basis with inadequate measures in place to support their health. Some of the challenges they face include stigma and discrimination which could lead to depression, poor allocation of resources by government at state and national level to cater for their needs, access to healthcare and provider prejudice, and adherence to HIV/AIDS treatment options. Although local and international non-governmental organisations and other private facilities implement programmes and services to reduce the HIV/AIDS burden in Nigeria, especially by making HIV/AIDS treatment options available, people living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria still face challenges in adhering to treatment. The non-adherence to prescribed medications also makes very challenging to achieve the 90-90-90 target by UNAIDS in Nigeria. The 90-90-90 target was set upon the realization that ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic will be impossible until HIV treatment is made available to everyone who needs it. Therefore, the 90-90-90 target aims that

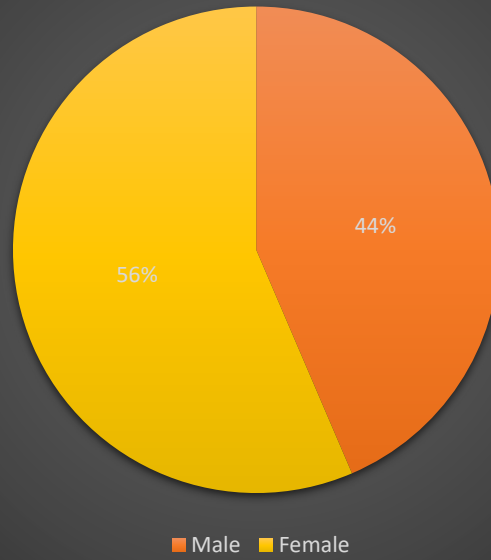
- By 2020, 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status
- By 2020, 90% of all people diagnosed with HIV infection will be placed on sustained antiretroviral therapy
- By 2020, 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

Many factors contribute to the non-adherence of people living with HIV/AIDS to treatment options in Nigeria. Poverty, inadequate access to healthcare services, lack of information, self-stigma and many more contribute to this during HIV/AIDS treatment especially for outpatient care. Most recently, the lockdown and travel bans put in place by the government of Nigeria as a measure to curb the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has also exacerbated the challenge of non-adherence to HIV/AIDS treatment, especially antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.

This survey sought to generate evidence on the impact of COVID-19 on people living with HIV/AIDS in Lagos state at the time of the lockdown and travel bans in terms of access to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. Although Lagos has over 1000 primary health centres across the state, the COVID-19 lockdown and travel bans had an impact on people living with HIV/AIDS who were in the state at the time of the lockdown. The survey questions were disseminated through an online platform (SurveyMonkey) and 158 respondents were reached who were resident in Lagos state during this period.

Below is an analysis of the survey questions and responses gathered:

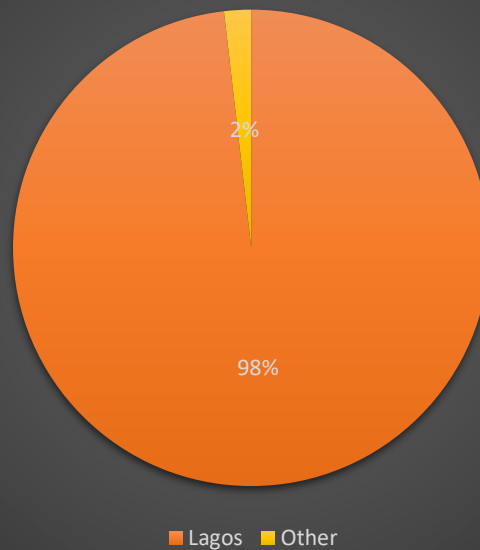
1. Sex of respondents



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Male	71	44%
Female	92	56%
TOTAL	163	100%

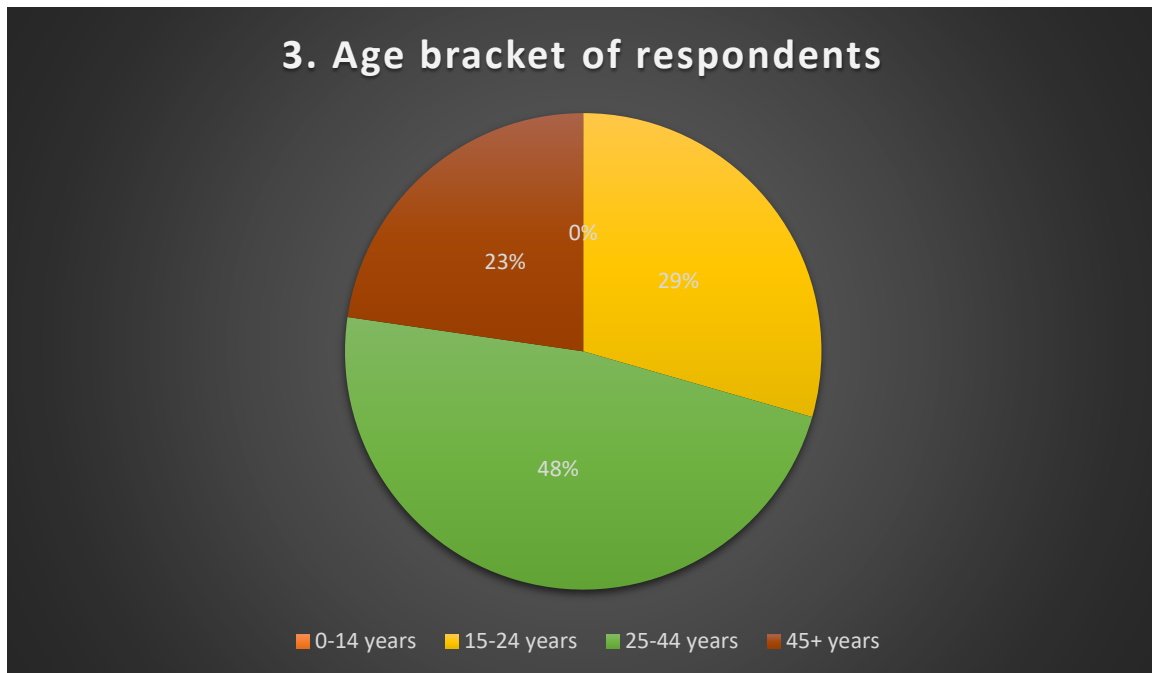
1. There were 71 male respondents and 92 female respondents for this survey in Lagos state.

2. Location of respondents



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Lagos	161	98%
Others	3	2%
TOTAL	164	100%

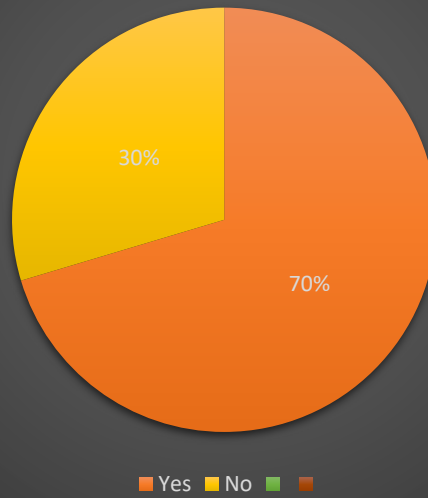
- The survey was targeted at people living with HIV who were in Lagos state during the Coronavirus lockdown period and we had 161 of them as respondents. The other 3 respondents were not in the state at the time.



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
0-14 years	0	0%
15-24 years	48	29%
25-44 years	78	48%
45+ years	37	23%
TOTAL	163	100%

- The respondents were all 15 years and above. 48 respondents were between 15 – 24 years old, 78 respondents were between 25 - 44 years old and 37 respondents were 45 years or above.

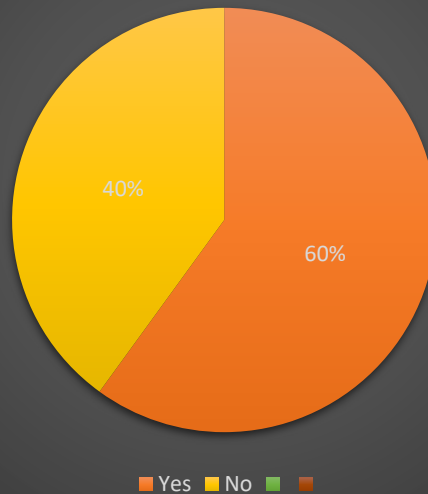
4. Are you currently on antiretroviral (ARV) drugs?



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	114	70%
No	48	30%
TOTAL	162	100%

4. The target respondents for this survey were people living with HIV and use antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. Only 114 respondents were on antiretroviral (ARV) drugs at the time of this survey.

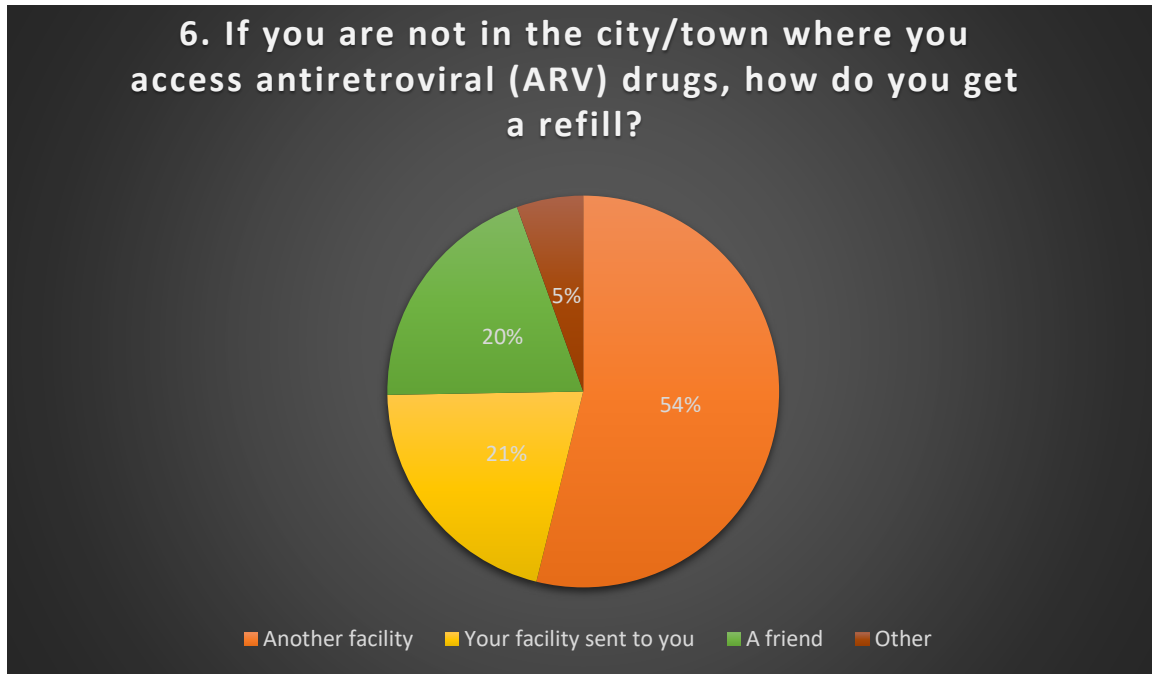
5. Are you currently in the city/town where you access antiretroviral (ARV) drugs?



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	96	60%
No	64	40%

TOTAL	160	100%
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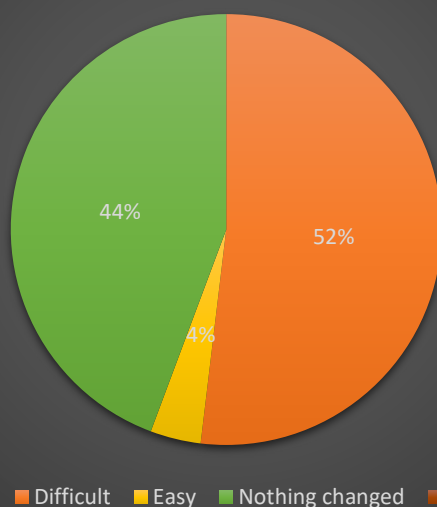
5. It is common for people to travel from one place to another as part of life. During this period of the Coronavirus lockdown, only 96 of the respondents were still in the city where they access antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. 64 respondents were not in the city where they usually access antiretroviral (ARV) drugs.



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Another facility	49	54%
Your facility sent to you	19	21%
A friend	18	20%
TOTAL	91	100%

6. For respondents who used up their antiretroviral drugs during this period, 49 got a refill from another facility other than the one they are registered with, 19 respondents accessed theirs from the facility they are registered with and 18 respondents got refills from their friends.

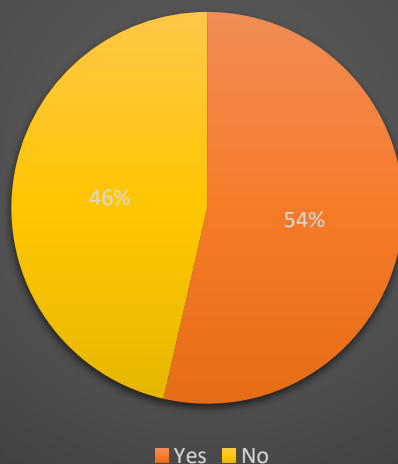
7. Describe how the lockdown and travel ban affect your access to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Difficult	82	52%
Easy	6	4%
Nothing changed	70	44%
TOTAL	158	100%

7. Due to the Coronavirus lockdown and travel ban, 82 respondents shared that it was difficult to access antiretroviral drugs. 6 respondents shared that it was easy to access while 70 of the respondents accessed it as normal as it was before the lockdown and travel ban.

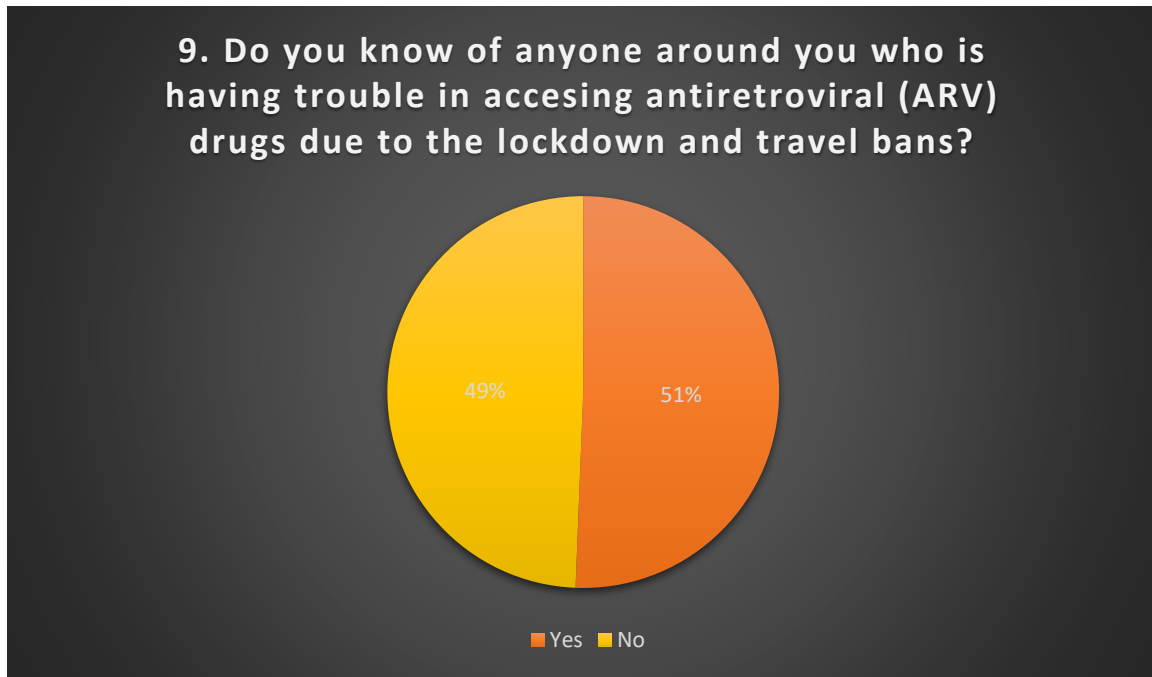
8. Have you missed any dose of your antiretroviral (ARV) drugs as a result of challenges in accessing them?



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	82	54%

No	71	46%
TOTAL	153	100%

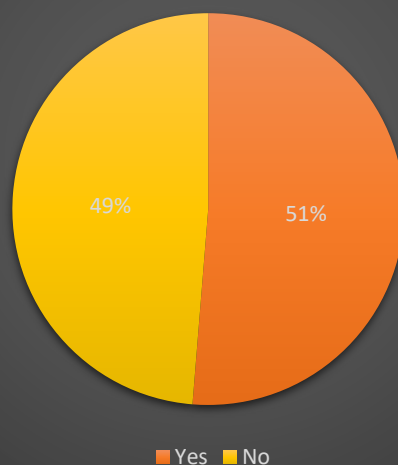
8. This survey also sought to measure adherence to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in the period of the Coronavirus lockdown and travel ban and 82 respondents shared that they have missed at least one dose of their regimen due to challenges in accessing them. 71 respondents were able to stay adherent during this period.



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	81	51%
No	79	49%
TOTAL	160	100%

9. 81 respondents shared that they know other persons who are also having trouble in accessing antiretroviral (ARV) drugs due to the Coronavirus lockdown and travel ban. 79 respondents did not have anyone around them having trouble in accessing antiretroviral (ARV) drugs even in during the Coronavirus lockdown and travel ban.

10. Are you certain on how to get your next refill of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs if you run out of stock?



OPTIONS	NO. OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	80	51%
No	76	49%
TOTAL	159	100%

10. Only 80 respondents were sure of how to get a refill of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs if the lockdown and travel ban continued. 76 respondents were not sure how to get a refill for themselves.

KEY POINTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- There are inadequate options available for people living with HIV/AIDS to access HIV/AIDS treatment like antiretroviral (ARV) drugs in different parts of Nigeria. People living with HIV/AIDS should be able to access antiretroviral (ARV) drugs from wherever they are in the country.
- Facilities that provide HIV/AIDS treatment services should have a functional directory with nationwide coverage to support people living with HIV/AIDS in any part of the country.
- Home-based HIV/AIDS care services should be resuscitated in Nigeria, especially for people living with HIV/AIDS in hard-to-reach parts of the country and top provide treatment support during lockdown periods such as the period of this survey.
- HIV/AIDS treatment facilities should dispense antiretroviral (ARV) drugs that will last for longer periods to mitigate unforeseen hindrances to refill appointments.