

## ABSTRACT

Uganda estimates the HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the UPDF to be between 27% and 30%, more than four times above the national prevalence rate of 6.7%. This trend of HIV transmission indicates possible gaps in the knowledge, and attitude and affects their health behaviour in as regards HIV/AIDS. The researcher therefore sought to carry out a study; Knowledge, Attitude and Socio-Economic factors as regards HIV/AIDS in the Ugandan Army; Case Study: Ghadaffi Army Barracks, Jinja District.

The objectives of this research project are to assess levels of knowledge, attitude and socio-economic aspects of soldiers in the Uganda army in as regards HIV/AIDS with the goal of developing new interventions.

The research design used in this study was a cross-sectional design that was quantitative and qualitative in nature. This study took place in Ghadaffi Barracks and the population of interest was male and female soldiers aged 18 - 49 years who have been in active service in the last 5 years, and were resident in Ghadaffi army barracks at the time of study.

Data were collected through the use of semi-structured interviews with questionnaires and also focus group discussions. The collected data was analyzed using a computer program; Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and MS Excel for graphic impression. With all the data collected from the respondents (n =50), and analysis done, a mean score of 57.6

indicates that the members of the Uganda Army are quite knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS. They are aware of its cause (62%), correct means of transmission (86%) signs and symptoms and prevention (87%). A positive attitude to note is that a good percentage (88%) of the soldiers has been tested for HIV/AIDS.

However, the study also revealed that there are significant attitudinal and socio-economic aspects of HIV/AIDS among the soldiers. There exists a negative attitude towards those living positively with HIV: (76% Vs24, OR 3.167,  $X^2 = 0.254$ , PV= 0.024). and (44%) feel uncomfortable around a PLWHA. This hints on the existence of other stigma related issues among the soldiers. The study further unveiled that emotional stress that led to the need for company of the opposite sex (for sexual relief) is a significant socio-economic aspect (n=32%, OR=0.471,  $X^2 = 4.987$ , PV=0.02). Lastly a regression analysis revealed that duration of service in the army is significant (PV=0.018), indicating that service in the army presents an occupational hazard of HIV/AIDS to its members.

Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that targeted information on HIV/AIDS should be provided for all soldiers at various levels of military command, soldiers be engaged more in HIV/AIDS campaigns, implementation of support systems for afflicted soldiers, and the use of soldiers' personal experiences with HIV/AIDS in developing IEC material for HIV/AIDS education in the military.