

HIV/AIDS in Yoruba Perspectives: A Conceptual Discourse

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ABSTRACT Since 1980s when HIV/AIDS became a worldwide epidemic, the explanation of its aetiology and etymology has established three main global perspectives. These are cultural, dependency, and rational choice theses. These theses have been used to explain the prevalence, and impacts of HIV/AIDS especially in Africa. They have also been used to develop policies against HIV/AIDS. There is a continuous increase in cases of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria especially in the Yoruba dominated States of Southwestern Nigerian. In the region, it is on record that the prevalence was 4.6% on the average as at 2004; yet those three main global perspectives still govern the explanation and policy intervention of HIV/AIDS. This study therefore examines the application of these theories in Yoruba culture vis-à-vis the people's perception of HIV/AIDS. It also explores the possibility of using the theories to establish intervention policies against HIV/AIDS in the study area. The study involves ethnographic fieldwork conducted in some selected communities of the Yoruba society. In-depth interview, key-informant interview, focus group discussions and participant observation were used as data collection strategies. The study revealed that with regard to the Yoruba culture of sexuality, disease, and poverty, the three main global theses have ignored specific internal factors in explaining AIDS pattern in the Yoruba society. Thus, policies emanating from these theses have failed to adequately curtail the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the society. Hence, there is need for re-direction to community – specific explanation of HIV/AIDS.