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**INVOLVING OPINION LEADERS IN THE SEARCH FOR AN APPROPRIATE
VOCABULARY FOR HIV VACCINE TRIALS IN NIGERIA**

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BACKGROUND

Community involvement has been found to increase the acceptability of new products. There are indications that HIV vaccine trials may commence in our setting in the near future.

METHODS

We conducted four focus group discussions in Yoruba language from community leaders about HIV vaccines as a part of a bigger study involving sexual and reproductive health rights. We explored the acceptability of the literal Yoruba language translation of HIV vaccines and asked whether they would be willing to convince others to participate in HIV vaccine trials in the future. The discussions were audio taped, transcribed and coded using the NUDIST software. The inter-observer variability was 82%.

RESULTS

Twenty-three respondents participated in the survey. The age ranged from 44 to 65 years. Eighteen (78%) of them had never heard of the term HIV vaccines. Four of those who had heard about HIV vaccines thought that the literal translation of HIV vaccines did not convey the full meaning. However they would be willing to convince others to participate in the trials when they start. The fear of being labeled “HIV positive” was the greatest hindrance to their willingness to participate and convince others to do so. Two respondents had the fear of infection with HIV and how they would translate what we explained to them about HIV vaccines.

CONCLUSION

The urgent need for community-based partnerships in identifying culturally-sensitive interpretations for HIV vaccines were identified.

