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**HIV AND STI EDUCATION: AN INTEGRAL COMPONENT  
OF HIV BIOMEDICAL PREVENTION EFFORTS**

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INTRODUCTION

The New HIV Vaccine and Microbicide Advocacy Society (NHVMAS) focuses on facilitating a conducive political and social environment to support New HIV Prevention (NPT) technology research and possible future uptake of products. One of its cardinal programs is to address research literacy within possible communities that could engage in NPT related researches. This abstract shares our views and observations in the field with respect to HIV prevention education.

METHOD

NHVMAS conducts sensitization and awareness programs amongst communities of youths in Lagos working with several youth communities in Nigeria. Its education strategy basically consists of integrating NPT and research literacy information within HIV prevention messages. A six days training for youths in one of the states in Nigeria addresses these myths and misconceptions identified during community sensitization.

LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the many HIV sensitisation and awareness creation efforts till date, there are still a lot of myths and misconception about STI and HIV within the many communities that are most eligible for HIV prevention clinical trials in Nigeria. Unfortunately, these myths also impact negatively on their reproductive health as there was much misinformation about their reproductive health. For many who have received information on HIV, information on STI and reproductive health is still poor and a possible drawback to the possible achievements in making an impact on HIV infection control in vulnerable populations. Training of youths on reproductive health linking it up with HIV/STI/NPT education does go a long way in addressing misconceptions and empowering the youths.

### CONCLUSION

There is need to create more awareness among youths on STI's, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and relating it to the New HIV Prevention Technology (NPT) amongst youths especially in rural communities. Training does help a long way. Inclusion of this information in school based educational programs is one step in the right direction.