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**HEALTH BENEFITS TO A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATING IN HIV/AIDS RESEARCH
PROGRAMME, LAGOS, NIGERIA**

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ISSUE

In Nigeria, HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to be a major problem. HIV/AIDS research continues to play an important role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. This paper reviews how research may entail added benefits to research communities.

METHOD

WINYOREF commenced HIV vaccine cohort development in May 2005 where 564 adult volunteers were enrolled from six districts in the state. All volunteers enrolled in this study went through a complete physical examination. Treatment was offered for minor ailments and referrals were made to the state's General Hospital for major ailments. Volunteers were tested for Malaria, STD, and HIV. Treatment was offered to participants and non-participants. HIV/AIDS and STD education was conducted during community awareness programs. All HIV positive individuals were referred for care. To date, there have been more than 5,000 patient visits for medical consultation. The referral rate has been around 5% per month. Majority of the cases referred have been newly diagnosed hypertensive. Rare cases, including cancer of the penis, have been seen at our research site.

LESSON

The research community greatly appreciates benefits like treatment for minor ailments. The communities develop confidence in research teams when the team is able to develop more intimate relationships with them, and may present themselves for care even when they have terminal illnesses.

CONCLUSION

In resource limited settings where access to care is limited, researchers should be prepared to provide benefits like free treatment of minor ailments and develop appropriate referral channels and links to assist volunteer participants.