PREVALENCE AND RISK FACTORS FOR CERVICAL SQUAMOUS INTRAEPITHELIAL LESIONS AMONG WOMEN INFECTED WITH HIV IN ABAKALIKI, NIGERIA

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BACKGROUND
Carcinoma of the cervix is the commonest female genital tract malignancy in Nigeria. Immunosuppression has been linked with acquisition and persistence of HPV infection which is known to trigger changes in the cervical epithelium resulting in cancer of the cervix.

OBJECTIVES
To determine the prevalence and risk factors for cervical dysplasia in HIV-positive women receiving care at the Federal Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY
The study was a prospective cross-sectional study of 206 HIV positive women attending the HIV clinic at the Federal teaching Hospital Abakaliki. Papanicolaou smear was collected and CD4 count measured. Statistical analysis of the results was carried out using the SPSS version 16 software package.

RESULTS
The prevalence of squamous intraepithelial lesion (SIL) was 6.3% in HIV positive patient. X2 = 11.550, P-Value = 0.013. Of those with abnormal cervical cytology, 35 (17%) had inflammatory smear, 16 (6.3%) had low-grade SIL, and 4 (1.9%) women had Trichomonas vaginalis. A CD4 lymphocyte count of <200 cells/mm3 was found to be significantly associated with cervical SIL X2 = 52.660, P-Value = 0.001. Poor educational level, multiple sexual partners and low CD4 count were found to have increased risk factor for SIL.

CONCLUSION
This study demonstrated that SIL was higher in HIV positive patients. There was a strong correlation between educational levels, low CD4 count and multiple sexual partners, in the risk of SIL in HIV positive patients.

Keywords: Abakaliki, cervical smear, cervical squamous intraepithelial lesions, human immunodeficiency virus, risk factors, Nigeria.