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Letter to the Editor

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Nurses' knowledge of HIV/AIDS

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A recent article in this journal presented the knowledge and attitude towards caring for HIV/AIDS patients in Nigeria. The authors, in their discussion section, state that the majority of their respondents had a good knowledge of HIV/AIDS in contrast to the results of a South African study of nurses. In support of that statement the authors cite the study of Juan et al and hypothesise that this difference may be due to the fact that their study was done in urban areas of Nigeria while the study by Juan et al was done in a rural area of South Africa.²

In fact the study by Juan et al was done in the Changhua Christian Hospital in Changhua City in Taiwan, not in South Africa. At the time of that study, the hospital comprised of 1,696 beds and the Changhua City had a population of 2,35,000. Thus the contradictory findings regarding HIV/AIDS knowledge of nurses is thus not likely due to urban/rural difference between the two studies.

The contradictory findings are more likely due to the difference of questions to elicit nurses' knowledge of HIV/AIDS between the two studies. The study by Juan et al focussed on nurses' knowledge on the presence of HIV in biological fluids and methods of destroying the virus, while the study by Okpala et al primarily focussed on HIV transmission. ^{1,2} Our findings of less than satisfactory HIV/AIDS knowledge of Taiwanese nurses has also be found in two other studies from Taiwan. ^{3,4}

As instigator and corresponding author of the study of Juan et al, I wish to correct the conclusions of Okpala et al in case their statements are cited incorrectly in the future. ^{1,2}

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