

Choice of HIV/AIDS prevention strategy: Evidence from Ghana

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The focus of this paper is to examine factors influencing individual's choice of any of the three main strategies for preventing HIV/AIDS; namely, abstinence, faithfulness and condom use. This study is motivated by the current wave of discourse on morality, the church and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. With significant proportions of people failing to live with chastity before marriage and fidelity in marriage, the HIV/AIDS prevention strategies banging on morality seem challenging. We test two hypotheses in this paper. Firstly, we posit a variation between the 'ideal' HIV/AIDS preventive strategy and personal choice. Using data on "What can people do to prevent HIV/AIDS" and "What would you do to prevent yourself from being infected with the virus that AIDS", we match the responses and test for the statistical difference. The second hypothesis argues that respondents without any religious affiliation are more likely to opt for condom use relative to abstinence and faithfulness. Data for the study is based on the 2005 Ghana Living Standard Survey. Chi-square and multinomial logistic regression are used to respectively test the two hypotheses. We observe that a statistical significant proportion of respondents recommend abstinence or faithfulness but opt for condom use in their own circumstance. This suggests that although respondents are aware of preventive measures with less risk (abstinence and faithfulness), they are not likely to use these methods. On the determinants of choice of prevention strategy, our main explanatory variable indicates that having a religion informs choice of either abstinence or being faithful. Other variables that were significant in our model are; education, age, marital status, location and income. The foregoing suggests that the church has an important role to play in addressing the HIV/AIDS pandemic.