

TURNING **AIDS**
THE TIDE **IN NIGERIA**

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New Academia Publishing 2018

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Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018964650
ISBN 978-1-7326988-0-2, hardcover (alk. paper)

Cover Design:

Lucia Ricci and Rich Kendall

Cover Photography:

Lucia Ricci

Back Cover and Essay Photography:

Dominic Chavez

Interior Design and Layout:

Rich Kendall for Chalk Design, Boston, MA USA



New Academia Publishing, 4401-A Connecticut Avenue NW #236, Washington DC 20008
info@newacademia.com - www.newacademia.com

*This book is dedicated to those battling the HIV epidemic in Nigeria —
and the millions of Nigerians living with the virus.*



Foreword

At the height of the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, the future appeared bleak with high mortality and significant negative socio-economic impact on the society. Thirty-five years after the identification of the first case, the combination of anti-retroviral drugs and numerous prevention strategies have resulted in a phenomenal change in the narrative, although a definitive cure has not been found.

The HIV prevalence in Nigeria rose steadily from 1.8% in 1991 to a peak of 5.8% in 2001 before it began a consistent decrease to 3.0% in 2014. People living with HIV (PLHIV) who access health services are able to live normal lives as the disease is now managed like any other chronic illness. The Nigerian Government and its partners have succeeded in providing life-saving anti-retroviral drugs for over 1 million persons as at the end of 2017.

Nigeria is implementing some innovative ideas to transform the HIV sector. We have decided to re-establish the National Treatment Programme to harmonize HIV treatment and ensure integration. We are also conducting the National HIV/AIDS Impact Indicator Survey (NAIIS), which should be completed by December, 2018. This will ensure the correct assessment of the burden of HIV infection in Nigeria.

The achievements recorded in the country with respect to treatment and prevention targets will not be complete without acknowledging the immense contribution of 'AIDS Prevention Initiative in Nigeria' (APIN), which started work in Nigeria in 2000 through a Harvard School of Public Health grant funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The first book *AIDS in Nigeria: A Nation on the Threshold* explored the dynamics of the epidemic, analyzed prevention efforts, identified crucial gaps, and formulated effective strategies for controlling the epidemic. In addition to the various sections written by experts in the respective fields, the book also featured

dramatic portraits of people whose lives have been forever transformed by AIDS. Their stories revealed the human costs of the epidemic—and the courage required to overcome it.

This second edition, *Turning the Tide* provides updated information on the various topics, highlighting the successful strategies that were deployed to 'halt and reverse' the HIV epidemic and the new areas of focus that have emerged. The adoption of the 'test and treat' policy, decentralization of facilities providing ART services, utilisation of differentiated models of care and index partner testing have contributed to the achievements recorded.

The new sections in this edition include — HIV Drug Resistance, HIV and TB, HIV Adolescent Care, HIV Pharmacy and HIV Laboratory Infrastructure Strengthening. These are important areas that require sustained focus if we are to achieve our national targets. This edition is a product of extensive cross-sectoral collaboration involving government, bilateral and multilateral organizations, civil society and academia. I am optimistic that proper use of this book will channel thinking and appreciation for a marked improvement in the way HIV infection is managed in this country.

This book is therefore an excellent resource material which should be used by researchers, clinicians, laboratorians, sociologists, public health officers, amongst others, who want to have accurate information about the successes achieved in the HIV response in Nigeria and the efforts being made towards meeting the global target of eliminating AIDS by 2030.

Together we can end AIDS!

Prof Isaac F. Adewole

FAS, FSPSP, FRCOG, DSc (Hons)
Honourable Minister of Health

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