



**School of Public Health
Department of Environmental and Occupational Health**

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctorate of Public Health

John O. Olawepo
will defend his dissertation:



**FROM FIGHTING WASTING TO SHEDDING EXCESS:
AN EXPLANATORY SEQUENTIAL MIXED-METHOD STUDY OF OBESITY AMONG PEOPLE LIVING
WITH HIV IN NIGERIA**



Abstract

The use of antiretroviral therapy (ART) has led to longer, healthier, lives for many people living with HIV (PLHIV). Accordingly, aging comes with associated co-morbidities like obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to further understand the emergent phenomenon of obesity among PLHIV who are on treatment. An explanatory sequential design was used that involves the analysis of de-identified, quantitative, secondary data from two states in southeastern Nigeria in the first phase, and then further explaining the quantitative results with 16 key informant interviews (KIIs) of healthcare providers (HCPs) in the second phase. The quantitative study showed that after 24 months on ART, the number of participants who were obese increased by 186%, while those underweight decreased by 59%. The median BMI increased from 21.8 kg/m² (IQR: 19.4, 24.5) at baseline to 23.6 kg/m² (IQR: 21.1, 26.6) after 24 months. Overall, the BMI increased in 74.7% of the participants. Further analysis showed that age at ART commencement, baseline BMI, and CD4 category at baseline were all significantly associated with increase in BMI. The qualitative results showed that while several HCPs saw obesity among PLHIV on treatment as an important clinical problem, most were not worried about it as long as the PLHIV did not have any physical or cardio-metabolic complications related to obesity. Interestingly, the HCPs all felt that obesity among PLHIV was not a significant public health problem because they perceived that very few PLHIV were obese.

Date: Friday, March 27, 2020

Time: 2:00 PM

Location: GTW 318

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Committee In Charge:

Dr. Jennifer Pharr, Advisory Committee Chair
Dr. Chad L. Cross, Advisory Committee Member
Dr. Francisco S. Sy, Advisory Committee Member
Dr. Karl Kingsley, Graduate College Representative