

OBJECTIVE:

To establish the food consumption, dietary habits and nutritional status of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and adults whose HIV status is not established.

DESIGN:

Cross-sectional descriptive survey.

SETTING:

Thika and Bungoma Districts, Kenya.

SUBJECTS:

A random sample of 439 adults; 174 adults living with HIV/AIDS and 265 adults whose HIV/AIDS status was not established in Thika and Bungoma Districts.

RESULTS:

Majority of PLWHA consume foods that are low in nutrients to build up the immune system and help maintain adequate weight, and there is little variety in the foods they consume. More adults who are HIV-positive are undernourished than those whose status is not established. Of the HIV-positive adults, those with a BMI of ≤ 18.5 kg/m² were 23.6 % (Thika 20.0 % and Bungoma 25.7 %) while of the adults whose status is not established those with BMI ≤ 18.5 kg/m² were 13.9 % (Thika 9.3 % and Bungoma 16.7 %).

CONCLUSIONS:

Adults who are HIV-positive are more likely to be undernourished than those whose status is not established, as there is a significant difference ($P = 0.000$) between the nutritional status (BMI) of PLWHA and those whose HIV/AIDS status is not established. PLWHA consume foods that are low in nutrients to promote their nutritional well-being and health.