Characteristics of Nigerian children with Human immunodeficiency virus and Tuberculosis co-infection.

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The burden of tuberculosis in children is not as well documented as that in adults due to the difficulties in diagnosis. This difficulty is more in HIV/TB coinfection hence the characteristics of coinfected children has also not been extensively documented. This study describes the characteristics of Nigerian children who are coinfected with HIV and TB.

Consecutive HIV infected children attending the paediatric HIV clinic of a teaching hospital in Nigeria were enrolled for the study. The TB status, recent CD4 counts /percentage of the children were obtained from their medical records. Information on sociodemographic variables were obtained from parents/caregivers. All the children were weighed and the weights converted to Zscores.

Of 155 HIV infected children, 18(11.6%) were currently being treated for TB, 35(22.6%) had completed treatment for TB while 102(65.8%) had never had TB. Children who were currently coinfected were younger than those who had completed treatment and those who were monoinfected. Those with late stages of HIV at enrollment were more likely to have TB while more children who were currently coinfected were malnourished compared to those who had never had TB or those who had completed therapy for TB. There was no significant difference between currently coinfected, past coinfected and never coinfected children in terms of gender, duration of diagnosis, number of persons in household, CD4 percentage and CD4 counts.

A significant proportion of HIV infected children have or have had TB.
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The continuing risk for infection or reinfection mandates that the current WHO recommendation of isonazid preventive therapy be instituted.