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The Impact of the Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS on the Infection rate of Children: A Case Study of Kumi District.

HIV/AIDS and its adverse effects continue to give serious threats to development in Kumi district. The HIV prevalence rate in Kumi is estimated at 12.9% against the national average of 6.7%. Due to the high prevalence rates in the country, Uganda AIDS commission is emphasising the principle where all stakeholders operating in the fight against HIV/AIDS should rely on a comprehensive plan, which is well coordinated. There should be close monitoring and evaluation for improved service delivery. As a result Kumi district has a complementary strategic plan developed through participatory planning methodologies as a response mechanism to curb down the prevalence rates. This study sought to provide an insight into the impact of Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) on the infection rate of children in Kumi district. It focuses on the reality of HIV/AIDS and PMTCT, how PMTCT is implemented in the district, the HIV infection rate of children before the implementation of PMTCT and the HIV infection rate of children with the PMTCT intervention in place. The study also sought to establish some of the challenges that inhibit successful implementation of the intervention in the district. The methodology used included, questionnaires with open-ended questions, focus group discussions and interviews conducted with key informants on the obstetric care, provision of antiretroviral prophylaxis for HIV positive mothers, ANC and PNC visits in regard to VCT and ARVs adherence in accordance with the PMTCT programme and the possible perceived challenges.

Results-the perceived results by the respondents were improvement in general obstetric care, accessibility of the ARVs for PMTCT, staff training for PMTCT and awareness creation in the communities. The major challenge was with the reluctance of some women to complete the follow-up process, the high loss to follow up, and poor turn up for VCT. Due to these reasons, the district adopted a policy of compulsory couple testing during ANC visits. In some instances there is failure to adhere to the family planning and sex education guidelines. There are also instances of non-disclosure of HIV status to partners and difficulties in infant feeding for the HIV mothers. Most striking is the failure of the programme to engage all the categories of women of reproductive age to embrace the intervention strategies which aim to keep the women of reproductive age and their partners HIV negative, preventing unwanted pregnancies among HIV infected women and provide better integration of HIV care, treatment and support for HIV infected women and their families.

Key Words: Prevention, Mother-Child Transmission, HIV/AIDS, Infection, Children, Kumi District.