

HIV/AIDS Awareness and Testing in Ampath and Non- Ampath Served Centres as Observed During Community Based Education and Service (COBES)

Odhiambo K. O., Atieno A. R. and A. Kwena.

email: kevodhiambo@yahoo.com

Abstract

COBES is a programme in the Moi University College of Health Sciences' curricula that seeks to expose students to the community health needs and aims to educate them on how to carry out a community entry, diagnosis and interventions, with the purpose of determining appropriate disease prevention and health promotion measures. HIV/AIDS is one of the major health challenges in the communities around the COBES stations, with prevalence as high as 11 percent in some areas. The Academic Model of Providing Access to Health Care (AMPATH) is a consortium that operates in North Rift and part of Western and Nyanza provinces, with its main activities aimed at HIV/AIDS care and prevention. The study sought to determine the impact of AMPATH initiative on HIV/AIDS awareness and testing in stations where it operates in contrast to those without its operations. The research sites were identified from among the COBES stations in Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza Provinces and grouped as either AMPATH or Non-AMPATH stations, out of which 5 were sampled randomly from each category. In each station a review of COBES reports between the year 2011 and 2014 was done, focussing on the level of HIV/AIDS awareness and testing. The level of percentages of awareness and testing in each site over the years were taken and compared between the two categories viz AMPATH versus Non-AMPATH centres. The data was analyzed using Statistical Packaging for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. The ethical requirements for conducting research according to the Moi University/MTRH institutional research and ethics Committee (IREC) were adhered to. From the findings, an average of 79.75% of the respondents had done an HIV test in AMPATH stations compared to 62% in Non -AMPATH stations in the year 2011. In 2012, 86% had done testing against 76.2% in Non-AMPATH stations. In the same year, general good awareness on HIV/AIDS in AMPATH stations was at 49% while in Non-AMPATH stations it was 46.8%. Those who had done testing in AMPATH stations in 2013 averaged 86.5% with an awareness of 55.5 % compared to Non AMPATH with 74.8% tested and an awareness of 48.8%. In 2014, the average proportion of the respondents tested in AMPATH sites was 80.75% with good awareness level at 65.5%, whereas in Non -AMPATH stations it was 76.5 % tested with awareness rate at 54.4%. AMPATH centres showed a generally higher percentage of those who had done an HIV testing and had good knowledge concerning the disease.

Key words: *HIV/AIDS awareness and testing, AMPATH.*

Introduction

Background Information

Community Based Education and Service (COBES) is an academic program in the Moi University College of Health Sciences' curricula that is geared to imparting research skills among students. In their first year of learning, the program equips them with theoretical knowledge on community entry and diagnosis. In the second year, the learners go to the community to practically carry out the ideas learned in first year. Students in the third year of study learn to make research proposals and carry them out in the subsequent years of their learning. In making community entry and diagnosis, the second year students are posted to rural health centres for a period of six weeks to carry out their study, which encompasses wide aspects of health, such as HIV/AIDS within the community in which they are sent.

Academic Model of Providing Access To Healthcare (AMPATH) is a consortium that operates in western Kenya with its main activities aimed at promoting reproductive health and HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention and management. With its headquarters in the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) and branches in various health centres within its environs, its operations cover quite a large area in the region. HIV/AIDS and reproductive health promotion is done through carrying out community awareness campaigns, counseling, health education and provision of drugs to the infected.

Concerning HIV/AIDS, Sub-Saharan Africa is the most affected region, with 24.7 [23.4–26.2] million people living with HIV in 2013. Also sub-Saharan Africa accounts for almost 70% of the global total

of new HIV infections.¹ Survey results from the 2008/09 KDHS indicate that 6.3 percent of Kenya adults age 15-49 are infected with HIV. HIV prevalence in women age 15-49 is 8.0 percent, while for men age 15-49 it is 4.3 percent. This female-to-male ratio of 1.9 to 1 is higher than found in most population based studies in Africa.

Justification of the study

HIV/AIDS is still a problem in Kenya and the world at large. 1.5 million people died from HIV/AIDS related cases globally. There were approximately 35 million people living with HIV globally by the end of 2013 with 2.1 million new infections in the same year.²

In terms of awareness, the Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey (KAIS) and the Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS) both indicate that there is still low awareness. For instance, according to the 2008/9 KDHS report, it showed that 1.9 percent of the women in North Eastern region of Kenya had not heard about HIV/AIDS.

For the reasons above, it is justifiable that this study is significant and that because it shows impact of HIV/AIDS awareness, campaigns and advocacy, it can be a reason to scale up the strategies in combating this pandemic in the world.

Objectives of the study

1. To compare HIV/AIDS awareness and testing in AMPATH and Non-AMPATH centres.
2. To find out the level of HIV/AIDS awareness in AMPATH sites.
3. To find out the level of HIV/AIDS awareness in Non-AMPATH stations.
4. To find out the level of HIV/AIDS testing in AMPATH and Non-AMPATH stations.

Methodology

Study design: systematic review method was used. Reports of COBES from the year 2011 to 2014 were reviewed.

Sampling method: COBES centres were first grouped into AMPATH and Non-AMPATH centres. From each group, five centres were randomly selected without replacement. The names of all the available stations were written on small pieces of paper and put in either of the two categories. They were then randomly picked to form the study sample.

Study site: The study sites included Mosoriot, Turbo, Amukura, Naitiri and Chulaimbo Health centres and their environs as AMPATH sites. The Non-AMPATH areas included Kabuchai, Sirisia, Bukura, Mbale and Bokoli.

Target population: The target population represented the populace within Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya.

Methods of data collection: The methods of data collection included review of records. COBES reports for the last four years, that is 2011-2014 were retrieved from the COBES department's library. The reports were then compiled and a review of data on HIV/AIDS was carried out for the same period of four years.

Data analysis: Methods used for data analysis were the measures of central tendency and percentages. The tools used included Microsoft excel and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.) **Data Presentation:** The data was presented in the form of graphs, tables and prose.

Ethical Consideration: The students received the permission to carry out the research during their COBES program from the Moi University and MTRH Institutional Research and Ethics committee. The permission to use the COBES reports for this study was granted by the Moi University COBES office.

Findings

AMPATH Stations:

The table below shows HIV/AIDS statistics for AMPATH centres

Table 1: HIV/AIDS statistics for AMPATH centres

Station		Year			
		2011	2012	2014	2014
MOSORIOT	Tested	100%	83%	88%	93%
	Awareness	-	66%	65%	66%
AMUKURA	Tested	82%	93%	72%	71%
	Awareness	-	29%	52%	57%
TURBO	Tested	92%	92%	95%	95%
	Awareness	-	51%	48%	92%
NAITIRI	Tested	60%	75%	-	64%
	Awareness	-	50%	-	53%
CHULAIMBO	Tested	77%	-	91%	-
	Awareness	-	-	57%	-
	TOTAL				
	Tested:	79.75%	86%	86.5%	80.75%
	Awareness:	-	49%	55.5%	65.5%

Non-AMPATH Stations:**The table below shows the HIV/AIDS data****for Non-AMPATH sites** Table 2: HIV/AIDS data for

Non-AMPATH sites

Station	Year	2011	2012	2013	2014
KABUCHAI	Tested	77%	55%	80%	82%
	Awareness	-	47%	67%	31%
SIRISIA	Tested	69%	66%	65%	80%
	Awareness	-	37%	40%	69%
BUKURA	Tested	-	91%	87%	87%
	Awareness	-	53%	57%	35%
MBALE	Tested	40%	71%	81%	-
	Awareness	-	48%	52%	70%
BOKOLI	Tested	50%	98%	59%	57%
	Awareness	-	55%	42%	37%
	TOTAL				
	Tested:	62%	76.2%	74.8%	76.5%
	Awareness:	-	46.8%	48.8%	54.4%

The figure below shows the comparison of the levels of awareness between AMPATH and Non-AMPATH centres.

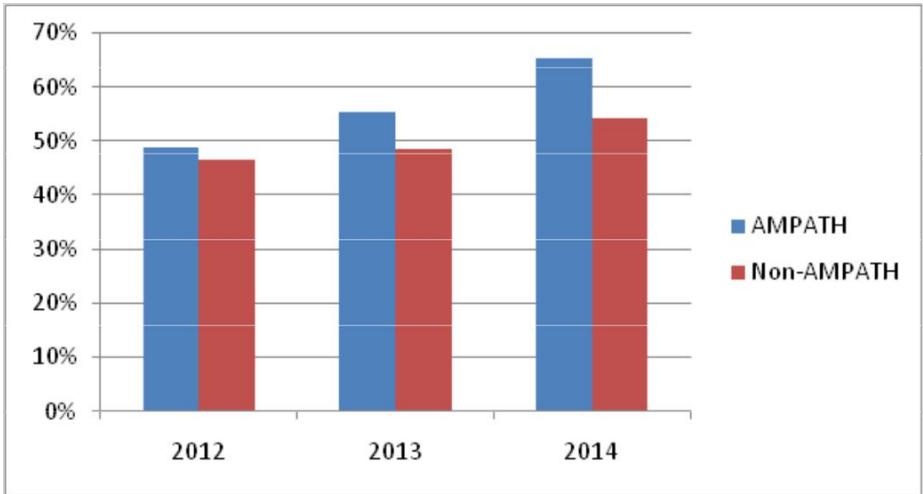


Figure 2: Comparison of levels of awareness.

The figure below shows the comparison of the percentages of tested individuals between AMPATH and Non-AMPATH stations.

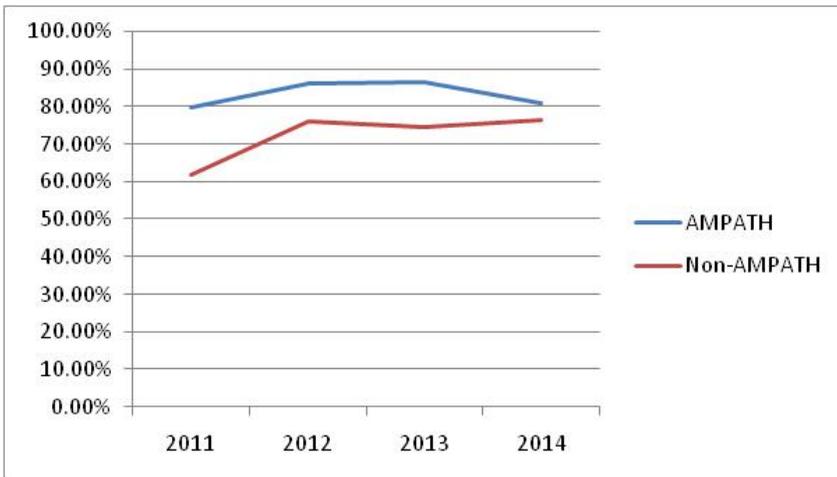


Figure 2: The comparison of the percentages of tested individuals.

Discussion

AMPATH advocates for HIV/AIDS awareness, its prevention, control and management. This is done through collaboration with the Ministry of Health by operating in the various government health centres in the country. Through its employees and the government health workers; it organizes outreaches within the community in their catchment areas. They also offer health education to the people on HIV/AIDS. To the infected people, there is continuous follow up and management together with counseling on re-infection.

These strategies empower the people and make them more knowledgeable on ways of preventing infection and managing the infected cases among the community. As a result, there are reduced chances of infection within an area where proper education, awareness, counseling and management of HIV/ AIDS has been carried out.

Conclusion and Recommendations

There was generally higher awareness and testing levels in AMPATH centres compared to the Non-AMPATH centres.

1. The government through the ministry of education should expand awareness program through more partnerships with organizations with the same interest.
2. The government should allocate more funds for awareness and community education more so to the unreached areas in the country.
3. AMPATH should continue with the same program and even with more operations to widen their targets in order to further increase the awareness,testing and management of HIV/AIDS.

References

- Kenya Demographic and Health Survey(KDHS) 2008/09
- Kenya AIDS Indicator Survey(KAIS) (Endnotes)
- 1 WHO Fact Sheet No.360
- 2WHO Fact Sheet No.360