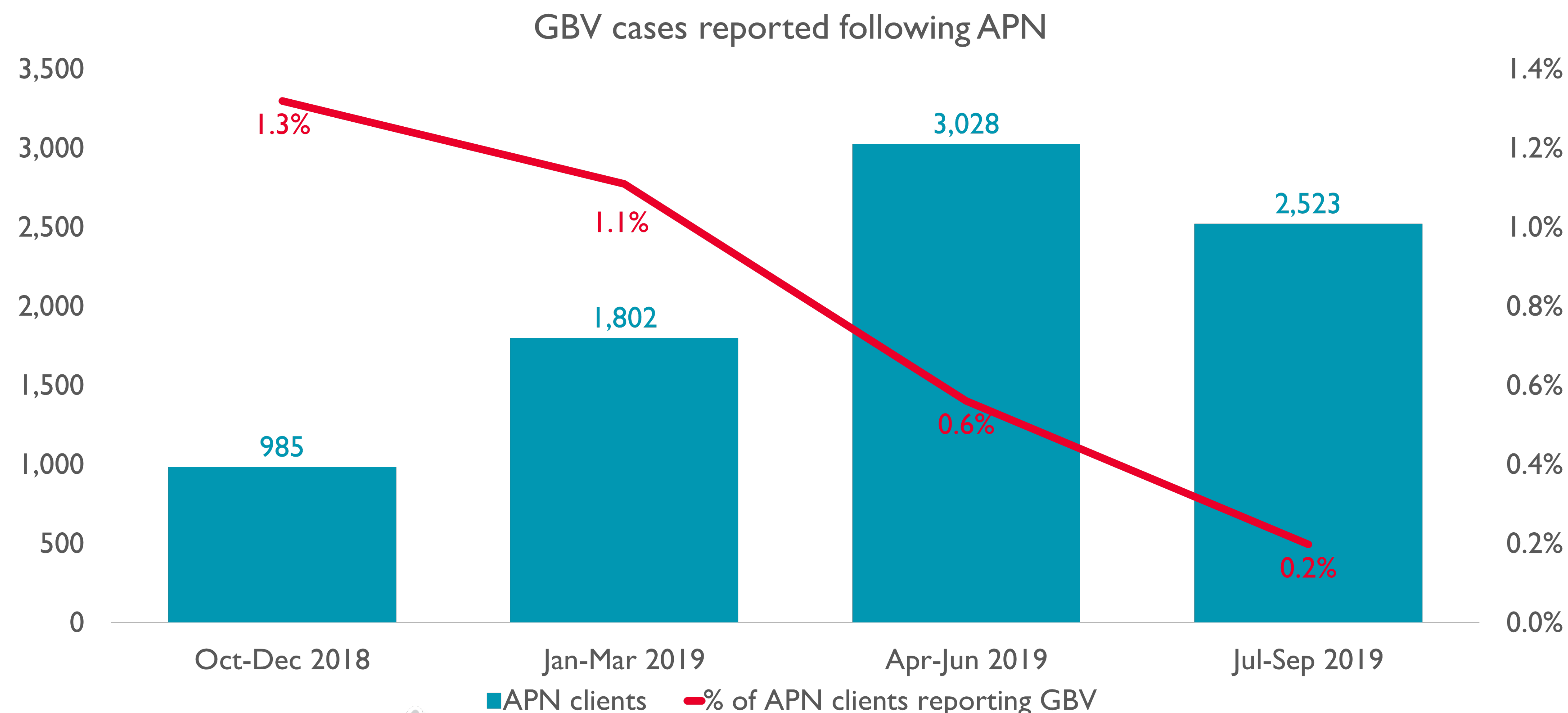


Background

Uganda's 2018 HIV prevention, care and treatment guidelines recommend assisted partner notification (APN) as a critical strategy to achieve HIV testing of partners at risk. Lango sub-region in Uganda has an HIV prevalence of 7.2%, above the national rate of 6.4%. National prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) is 22% among women; 8% among men. In the Lango region, 3,145 cases of GBV were reported between October 2018 and September 2019.

Methods

USAID's Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services North, Lango (RHITES-N, Lango) project is implemented by John Snow, Inc (JSI) and supports the training of health care providers on APN, GBV screening, timely support and monitoring of reported GBV cases, counselling on preventive GBV techniques, seeking timely help, referrals and involvement of other stakeholders. RHITES-N, Lango also conducted GBV sensitization through community dialogue meetings and radio talk shows.



Results

Between October 2018 and September 2019, 8,742 index clients were interviewed for APN, eliciting 12,434 partners. 11,101 were notified of HIV risk and 9,427 were tested. 2,656 (28%) were identified as HIV positive. Among clients of the APN services, 55 cases of GBV were reported: 53 female, 2 male. Of the 55 cases, two encountered sexual violence while 53 experienced physical violence. There was a 90% decline in the proportion of GBV cases reported among APN clients from October 2018 to September 2019.

Conclusions

APN is effective in identifying new HIV positive clients as we move towards HIV epidemic control 2020. However, GBV poses a threat towards achieving that goal. Establishing timely preventive GBV response strategies to prevent GBV occurrence and building health worker skills and capacity to respond and engage with communities is critical for sustained epidemic control.

Gender-based violence is a threat to HIV epidemic control and hampers efforts to identify missing positives through assisted partner notification