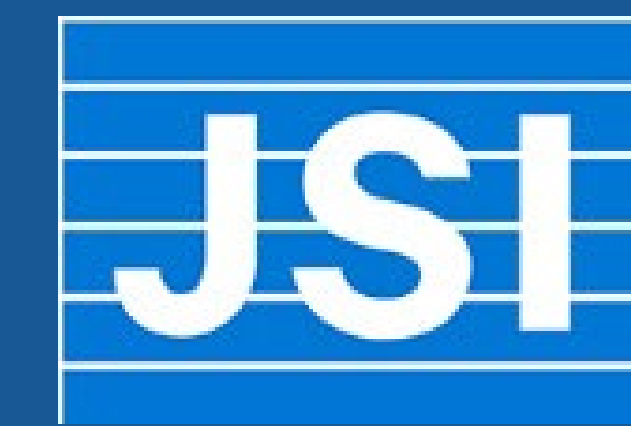


Testing Only those Who Really Need Testing: Use of HIV Risk Assessment Tool in the USAID DISCOVER-Health Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision Program in Zambia



Joshua Kashitala¹, C. Madevu-Matson², A Fullem², M. Chikuba-McLeod¹ 1. JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), Lusaka, Zambia 2. John Snow Inc. (JSI), Boston, MA, USA

In resource-limited settings, using an HIV-risk screening tool in a VMMC program increases positivity yield and saves money

PROBLEM

Nationally, at least 95% of male clients are tested for HIV before surgery, as part of the VMMC service package. However, this led to an HIV positivity yield of around 0.1%, compared to 5% in the general male population.

Therefore, using the HIV-risk screening tool in this population would identify those at high HIV-risk and reduce unnecessary and costly HIV testing.



USAID DISCOVER-Health Project

USAID DISCOVER-Health, a five year USAID-funded Project, provides social behaviour change communication (SBCC) in VMMC service delivery to reach males aged 20-34, who are key to achieving HIV epidemic control in Zambia.

RESPONSE

In April 2019, an HIV-risk screening tool was introduced in the VMMC program.

The HIV-risk screening tool is administered by a trained HIV counsellor during pre-surgery counselling.

The HIV-risk is determined based on client responses to the following 6 questions :

- HIV testing within 3 months
- Aware of partner HIV status
- Unprotected sexual contact
- Sexually transmitted infection symptoms
- Alcohol/drug use
- Drug use within 3 months

We compared pre-intervention HIV testing from the period July-December 2018, with post-intervention HIV testing for the same period in 2019, and computed estimated cost savings.

RESULTS

Implementation of the HIV-risk screening tool led to:

- Significant **reduction in testing volumes from 98% to 28%**
- **Increase in positivity yield from 0.17% to 0.28%**
- More time for effective HIV counselling with at-risk clients
- With a \$7 cost-rate per test per person, saved an estimated \$62,741

	Pre-intervention July to Dec 2018	Post-intervention July to Dec 2019
Circumcised	11,885	17,878
Tested for HIV	11,594	5,057
Tested HIV+	20	14
% Tested	98%	28%
% Yield Rate	0.17%	0.28%

CONCLUSION

In resource-limited settings, using an HIV-risk screening tool in a VMMC program:

- reduces HTS volumes
- increases HTS efficiency
- increases HIV positivity yield
- provides cost-savings

The limitation of this intervention is that we have not tested sensitivity and specificity of the HIV screening tool. Nevertheless, the USAID DISCOVER-Health project will evaluate these aspects to inform future implementation.



USAID DISCOVER-Health, a five year USAID-funded Project, is implemented by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. to improve access to and utilization of integrated quality health services and products in Zambia.