

Assisted Partner Notification Improves HIV Testing Yield to Achieve the First 95

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Problem

According to UPHIA (2016-2017), only 84% of people living with HIV know their status. The Uganda National Guidelines (2018) recommends assisted partner notification (APN) as a critical strategy to reach and identify at-risk individuals to meet UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets.

Assisted partner notification provides comprehensive services for persons infected with HIV or STIs and their partners, with a focus on index clients who are newly diagnosed HIV positive, have non-suppressed viral loads, or have a new sexually transmitted infection or partner.

This poster presents analysis showing high yield through APN, and specifically that more HIV positive women (55%) were identified through APN (yield of 30%) compared to men (yield of 27%).

Response

JSI conducted a phased roll out of APN by training and mentoring health care workers (HCWs), peers, and community health workers (CHWs) at 70 health facilities, through the USAID RHITES-North, Lango project.

JSI provided training and mentoring, data collection tools, job aids, and telephones. The index clients were line-listed and teams consisting of a HCW, counsellor, and CHW were formed to conduct APN.

Results

Between October 2018 and September 2019, of the 21,081 index clients eligible for APN services, 8,742 (41%) were interviewed. 11,101 partners were elicited (an average of two partners elicited for each individual); 11,101 (89%) of the partners were notified and offered HIV testing services; 9,427 (85%) of them tested for HIV; and 2,656 (28%) were newly diagnosed as HIV positive (yield). Female partners had a higher yield at 30% than male partners at 27%.

Conclusion

The success of APN depends on good data management systems to identify eligible index clients and their partners, and good knowledge and skills among HCWs, peers, and CHWs. APN identifies persons previously unaware of their HIV status, when they are sexual partners of newly infected, HIV positive individuals.

By linking elicited partners to care and same-day treatment, there is reduction in onward transmission risk.

The APN approach has the potential to better target testing strategies to identify >95% of people living with HIV in a community.

