

TITLE

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED STRATEGIES ON REDUCTION OF RISKS TO HIV INFECTION AMONG YOUNG FEMALES IN TAITA/TAVETA COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

HIV infection has become one of the most devastating infectious diseases globally. It is estimated that the number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS worldwide is 40 million. Over 30 million people have died of this chronic viral infection in the world. Sub-Saharan Africa, the most severely affected region in the world has more than 60% of hospital beds occupied by people with HIV related conditions. In Kenya, HIV/AIDS remains a major health and developmental challenge. Seven percent of Kenyans are infected and each year, there are 140,000 AIDS deaths among adults and 86,000 new infections. These are very high numbers with enormous and long term implications on the delivery of health services. Among the female youth in Kenya aged 15-24, 3% are HIV positive. Young women in this age bracket are more vulnerable to HIV infection than men in the same age. This poses a big challenge in this group of females who form part of the backbone of the Kenyan youth in the population. KDHS 2008-2009 survey results indicate that females of this age group are four times more likely to be HIV positive than men. The aim of the study is to establish the role of community strategies in reduction of risks to HIV and AIDS among young females aged 15-24 of Taita/Taveta County. This will be a cross-sectional study where qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection will be used. A total of 500 respondents aged 15-24 will be interviewed from two Districts in the county. Key informants in the communities will be interviewed, four Focus Group Discussions will be conducted. The study will be done in Taita /Taveta County for a period of six months. Data entry will be done using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analysis will be used to present the data. Cross tabulations will be used to assess associations between variables and chi-square to determine significant associations. Logistic regression will be done to control confounding factors and determine probability. The results will be used in providing information to the government and policy makers so that community strategies will be strengthened or beefed up further to make them more effective. More interventions targeting young females may be developed, scaled up and implemented to reduce risks to HIV/AIDS within the communities and by community members. It is envisaged the interventions through the study will reduce vulnerability to HIV and AIDS to young females through a empowering them with knowledge, skills and attitude which will go a long way in reducing the scourge.