

AB38 On-site HIV rapid testing experiences

Kelvin Hagwamuna, Seter Siziya, Maureen Chisembele, Ruth Kasonde

ABSTRACT TEXT

Background:

Diagnosis of HIV infection can be made by many different kinds of assays. These include assays like virus culture, PCR and antibody testing. Most cases of HIV infection are diagnosed by demonstrating the presence of specific antibodies in the blood. These specialized tests take long to perform. Rapid testing methods which are highly sensitive have been adopted by Microbicide Development Programme (MDP) Zambia in conformity with the local HIV testing algorithm.

Objective:

Experiences with rapid HIV testing methods during pilot study in relation to client intake.

Methodology:

Women from the Zambia sugar estate population were invited to take part in the 18 months pilot study. They had to undergo HIV testing every three months. Rapid methods used included Capillus and Determine HIV test kits. The women had to collect their results the same day and all the counselling done.

Results:

A total of 1145 women of reproductive age, 18-45 years in regular sexual relationships were screened for HIV in the laboratory using rapid testing methods. 606 were enrolled into the study. A retention rate of 80% was recorded. Among the 20% drop outs, none was dropped due to non-collection of HIV results or absconding due to long waiting for results. 2 (2%) were not willing to be tested. The other 18% dropped out due to reasons unrelated to waiting or collecting HIV results. There was no discrepancy in the results between the two methods (100%).

Conclusion:

The methods are cost effective, quick, and easy to perform. They are ideal for capturing of study participants due to less time spent at the clinic. The use of Rapid HIV test methods has shown that the waiting time and anxiety during the period of waiting is reduced. This increases the number of clients coming to collect their results and entering the study.

Mr. Kelvin Hagwamuna - Laboratory Technologist: Microbicides Development Programme, kelhagwamuna@yahoo.co.uk, tel +260 3 230834, fax +260 3 230868, MDP Zambia, Box 670555, Mazabuka, MAZABUKA, 10101, ZAMBIA