

Abstract

THPE0854 - Community-based intervention to improve the quality of HIV and STI care among traditional and biomedical health care providers in rural Uganda: a quasi-experimental study

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Background: The Bridging Gaps Project (BGP) is a 40-month intervention and research project in two rural districts of Uganda. The aim is to test novel models to increase the quality and uptake of HIV and STI care through increased collaboration between Traditional and Biomedical Health Practitioners (THP and BHP). One district was randomly selected to receive the intervention over a 12-month period. Impact was measured using before-after comparison between intervention and control districts. We report findings from the intervention which involved 45 THP and 21 BHP in Luwero district, Uganda.

Methods: Collaboration between sectors and quality of care were measured including: interviews with THP and BHP (n=70-80/ sector), community members (n=170-200), simulated client visits (SCV) (n=190 and 100), and checklists of THP and BHP work areas (THP n=70; BHP n= 7 [one per study clinic]). These measures were conducted prior to, during (SCV only), and after the intervention in the intervention and control districts (Kibaale).

Results: The study found significant post-intervention improvements in the intervention district compared to the control district in collaboration (p<0.05 for increased cross-sector collaboration; p<0.05 for increased reported BHP referrals from THP) and quality of care from the perspectives of community members (p<0.05 awareness that THP can give advice on HIV testing and distribute condoms), checklist audits (p<0.001 for THP improved use of IEC materials, condom availability, herbal packaging, and recordkeeping) and SCV (p<0.05 for BHP patients who received condoms, p<0.001 for THP referrals to BHP).

Conclusions: This study gives encouraging results of reported and observed improvements in collaboration between THP and BHP and the increased quality of HIV/STI care in both sectors following a community-based intervention. Study findings point to real possibilities for enhanced service provision through THP-BHP partnership that can respond to the urgent need for feasible interventions that contribute to scaling up quality HIV/STI services in Sub-Saharan Africa.