

L I G H T H O U S E

Routine HIV Testing and Counseling among Sexually Transmitted Infections

Experience from the Lighthouse at Bwaila Hospital

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Background

- High HIV prevalence among sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) patients in Malawi
 - 32% among all STI patients
 - 61% in genital ulcer disease patients
- Although STIs are known to facilitate HIV acquisition and transmission, there is low uptake of HIV testing counseling (HTC) services among STI patients in Malawi
- At Bwaila STI unit, only 43% of patients had HIV status ascertained by June 2009
 - Patients were referred to another site for HIV testing services
- To address the gap, Lighthouse integrated HIV testing Counseling services within STI clinic

Objectives

To increase HIV testing and counseling uptake among STI patients

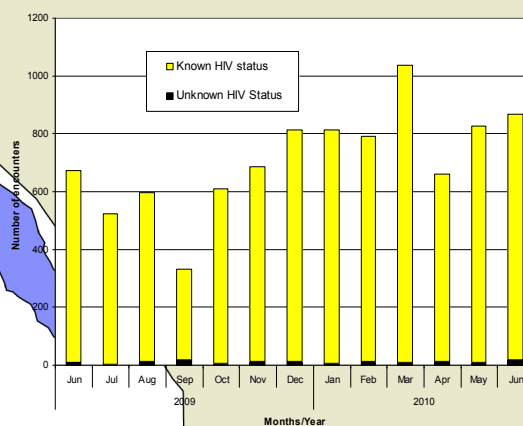
Methods

- All STI patients were sensitized on benefits of HTC using a standard group pre-test education protocol
- All STI patients went through individual testing counseling using opt-out strategy
- HIV positive patients were linked to HIV care at Martin Preuss centre

Results

Between June 2009 and June 2010
 9,232 patients registered
 - 9,134 (99%) knew their HIV status
 8,354 (90%) were tested for the first time
 - Of those who tested for the first time 1,690 (20%) tested positive
 - 7,868 (94%) were tested with a partner
 Of the 2,470 clients who were HIV positive (new positive and already positive),
 1,987 (80%) were referred to ART clinic

HTC encounters among STI patients between June 2009 and June 2010



Conclusions

- Integration of HTC services in the management of STI patients has led to high ascertainment of HIV status
- Although STI guidelines include HIV testing and counseling in case management, there are still operational challenges including infrastructure and personnel
- Need to intensify HTC services in all STI management