

Title Factors affecting utilization of youth friendly voluntary counseling and testing services among youth attending day public secondary schools in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract:

Young people aged between 15-24 years account for more than 50 percent of all HIV infections worldwide. More than 6,800 young people are newly infected with HIV and 5700 die each day throughout the world. Young people are particularly vulnerable to HIV because of social, cultural, biological, and economic reasons therefore VCT offers an important entry point to early prevention, care, and support of these youth. Research conducted in Kenya by the German Foundation for World Population estimates that one VCT prevents 1,104 infections. The main objective of the current study was to find out factors affecting utilization of YFVCT services among youth in day secondary schools in Nairobi. To achieve the objectives, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey on 400 students drawn from 10 day secondary schools. A ready-made sampling frame of all registered day secondary schools in Nairobi was carried out to come up with the study subjects. This study employed self-administered questionnaires. Descriptive statistical analysis was used for the analysis of the data by applying Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In addition, cross tabulation was used to ease the discussion of relationship between different variables and qualitative analysis was applied to supplement the discussion of data presented. Age and religion of the respondents, education, occupation of mothers and type of school had a significant relationship with the utilisation of youth friendly voluntary counseling and testing services with a P value of less than 0.05. Utilization of youth friendly VCT services by the youth was low (30%). Out of all those who visited a VCT, half did not test. Accessibility to VCT services is determined by components like access to information and how this information is passed to them. Teachers were the most preferred in passing information on YFVCT at 40.2%. Most of the VCTs visited by the youth were not youth friendly VCTs. To improve on the knowledge and utilisation of students on Youth friendly voluntary counseling and testing services and for future programming the umbrella body coordinating HIV and AIDS issues; NACC and other stakeholders should step up campaigns on the importance of testing and inform the youth on where to find youth friendly VCTs. Many youths are willing to seek VCT services in future and would prefer these facilities situated in the health facilities as long as these facilities are non-discriminative, physically accessible, affordable and informative. Therefore more health facilities should have Youth Friendly VCT services integrated into them to attract more youth. Health service providers should be trained in handling of youth so that the youth can access friendly, welcoming, caring, informative, non-judgmental and trustworthy staff. Ministry of education together with NACC should capacity build the teachers on HIV and AIDS so as to empower them in handling HIV and AIDS programmes in schools. The results of this study are intended to inform programming of HIV activities in schools.