

Title: Psychosocial and demographic factors affecting utilization of voluntary counselling and testing services among secondary school teachers in Nyando District, Kenya

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Abstract: HIV/AIDS continues to be a source of concern worldwide and more so in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Kenya is one of the countries with a high rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence estimated at 5.1%. About one million people in Kenya are estimated to live with HIV/AIDS but few know their status hence spreading further HIV. While most sectors of the society have been affected, one sector that has not received adequate focus and attention is education. The high mortality, morbidity and absenteeism of Kenya's teachers arising from HIV/AIDS are a combination of factors that has caused havoc in the Kenya's education sector and resulted in a decline in the quality of education. It is estimated that death rates among teachers in Kenya could be as high as six per day largely attributed to HIV/AIDS. While VCT has been suggested as a plausible commitment towards HIV/AIDS prevention, only 20% of teachers in Kenya have gone for VCT. This descriptive cross-sectional study therefore aimed at investigating the psychosocial and demographic factors affecting the utilization of VCT services among secondary school teachers in Nyando District, Kenya. The findings of this study would be important in guiding policy related to scaling up and promotion of VCT services among the teachers. Nyando District had 73 secondary schools with 753 teachers; 473 males and 280 females. Stratified sampling was used to determine the number of schools per administrative division to be included in the study. Simple random sampling was then used to select schools in each division. All consenting teachers in the 26 selected schools were eligible to participate in the study. A total of 255 secondary school teachers took part in the study. The methods of data collection used were administration of questionnaires and focus group discussions (FGDs). Cross tabulation was used to show relationships between the independent and dependent variables, and chi-square was used to test for existence of relationships between the variables,  $p < 0.05$  was considered statistically significant. Information from in-depth discussions was analyzed manually using qualitative methods. The data was presented descriptively and through the use of frequency tables and bar graphs. The study found significant relationships between utilization of VCT services and gender ( $p = 0.003$ ) and age ( $p = 0.004$ ), but not level of education, marital status, religious affiliation or area of residence. The study also found a positive association between utilization of VCT services, and perception of the importance of VCT as an HIV/AIDS control strategy ( $p = 0.039$ ). Majority (77%) of the respondents expressed willingness to utilize VCT services in the near future indicating a positive attitude towards future utilization of VCT services. Spousal approval of VCT utilization emerged as the most significant social factor affecting utilization of VCT services ( $p = 0.019$ ). The study among other recommendations, recommended that MOH and other VCT service providers immediately step up VCT promotion programs that will mainly focus on male and older members of the study population. They should also initiate promotion of couple HIV counseling and testing among them.