

ABSTRACT

Background:

Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV has been identified as the greatest means of HIV infection among children (UNAIDS 2010). HIV can be transmitted from an HIV-positive woman to her child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding. 95% of HIV infections in children is a result of mother to child transmission and this transmission occurs in 30-45% of HIV-positive pregnant women and without treatment, it is estimated that half of the HIV infected children will die before their second birthday hence contributing to high child and infant mortality rates. Also without treatment, the likelihood of HIV passing from mother-to-child is 15% to 45% however; effective EMTCT interventions can reduce this risk to below 5%.

General Objective:

To determine the influence of mentor mothers on the uptake of EMTCT services in the health centers of Butaleja district.

Methodology:

The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design which generated quantitative data from a selected sample.

Study Results:

The study showed that more than half 131(62%) of the mothers agreed that mentor mothers are vital in the uptake of EMTCT care. This proportion is slightly high due to counseling session conducted on the importance of EMTCT services among HIV positive mothers and various HIV counseling and testing programs that were accessed by mothers through the help of mentor mothers. The determinants of EMTCT service uptake included helping in: disclosing HIV to partner (OR 2.926, 95% CI 1.454-5.891), partner testing for HIV (OR 2.752, 95% C.I 1.523-4.975), being given information on EMTCT (OR 1.507, 95% CI .77-2.923), changing attitude (OR 7.550, 95% CI 3.683-15.475) and giving information about exclusive breast feeding for 6 months (OR 2.769, 95% CI 1.032-7.432). The

respondents who interacted with mentor mothers were 2.7 times more likely to encourage their wives to utilize EMTCT services than their counterparts who had not, they exclusively breastfed for 6 months and then gave other feeds as encouraged by mentor mothers; had an odds ratio of 2.7 which indicates that they had higher chances of utilizing EMTCT services. The respondents who had received information on EMTCT from mentor mothers were 1.5 times more likely to utilize EMTCT services than their counterparts who had not.

Conclusions:

The study established that mentor mothers have a role to play in the uptake of EMTCT services. Pediatric AIDS will only be eliminated when children grow up healthy and reach reproductive age with the skills and knowledge necessary to make the right choices to protect the next generation from HIV.

Recommendation:

There is need to train mentor mothers in order to deal with the challenges of strained health care workers and there is strong need for health policy planners to consider integrating mentor mothers into formal health care sector.