

## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Sexual health education plays an important role in raising knowledge and awareness levels of FSWs on STIs and HIV, leading to sexual behavioral change thereby keeping the transmission rates low, as was noted in a study in Australia (Alley, 2010). This study aimed to assess the behavioral interventions on behaviors of female sex workers enrolled in the Strengthening TB and HIV/AIDS responses in Eastern Uganda project in Mbale Municipality.

**Methodology:** A cross sectional survey design was adopted with quantitative data collection approach. The study population was 180 FWs where a sample of 118 Respondents (FSWs) was obtained. Snowball method was used as a sampling procedure. Data analysis was by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) analysis for quantitative.

**Results:** A total of 118 respondents were interviewed and of which 60 (50.85%) did undergo change in sexual behavior and the factors that contributed included uptake of HIV testing  $X^2=4.188(p=0.041)$ , type of condom used during sexual intercourse  $X^2=6.55(p=0.038)$ , disposal of used condoms  $X^2=5.847(p=0.016)$ , wearing of condom every round  $X^2=10.523(p=0.001)$ , negotiation with partner about condom use  $X^2=5.114(p=0.024)$ , frequency of condom use  $X^2=8.502(p=0.014)$  and community condom mobile out let  $X^2=4.961(p=0.026)$ , having ever had sexual health education  $X^2=3.98(p=0.046)$ , messages on prevention of gender based violence  $X^2=8.694(p=0.003)$  and rating of sexual health education received  $X^2=6.979(p=0.031)$ .

**Conclusions:** The effect of the provision of sexual health education on behaviors of FSWs enrolled in the STAR-E Project in Mbale Municipality between 2010 and 2017 was positive and high, attributed to implementation of several interventions in terms of condom use, uptake of care for HIV, regular screening for STIs and testing for HIV among others, FSWs positively responded to condom promotion through utilization, and distribution to clients and promotion in communities.

**Recommendation:** More sexual health education/communication tailored towards sexual behavior change among FSWs should be provided to all people in communities including the FSWs. This is because this study has indicated that FSWs face a greater challenge as more men prefer unprotected sex which is against sexual behavioral change.