

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Introduction**

This study investigated the knowledge and attitude towards uptake of routine counseling and HIV testing among women of reproductive age in Kimaanya village, Masaka district. The study particularly sought to assess the knowledge and attitude towards uptake of RCT because they dominantly affect the uptake of RCT services. This study was conceived due to the fact that Uganda's prevalence rates of children born with HIV /AIDS was high despite of the presence of RCT program. This was attributed to the fact that the response towards RCT programs in rural areas was still very low due to factors like poor sensitization about RCT services in different health centers and poor health seeking behaviors among people in rural areas.

### **General objective**

To investigate the knowledge and attitude of women of reproductive age towards uptake of RCT program in Kimaanya.

### **Methodology**

A cross sectional research study was conducted. Data was collected in July 2013, using researcher administered questionnaires from 334 respondents which were selected using convenience non probability sampling technique from the accessible population. Data was analyzed using STATA version 10 computer soft ware.

### **Results**

All the 334 questionnaires were correctly completed and returned. The study established that the proportion of women of reproductive age utilizing RCT program was high that is 241(72.16%) of women had ever used RCT. This was attributed to the prevailing knowledge where women of reproductive age had very high level of knowledge about the definition of RCT, who receives RCT, where it is done however the level of knowledge on benefits was low as majority 247(73.9%) of the respondents could mention only one correct benefit of using RCT. Similarly attitudes of women of

reproductive age also contributed to the high uptake level as majority of them 189(56.5%) suggested that RCT is necessary for women of reproductive age, 164(49.1% ) suggested that RCT should be part of PMTCT. However the study also revealed negative attitudes from the respondents as 102 (30.6%) of the respondents suggested that there is fear for RCT and HIV testing while 107(32.5) of the respondents suggested that RCT would increase rejection, stigma, discrimination and violence in homes.

### **Conclusion**

The study findings revealed that Uptake of RCT among women of reproductive age was moderately high also noting that the women of reproductive age had a very high level of knowledge about the definition of RCT, where RCT can be accessed, who receives RCT and good level of awareness was noted, however, the level of knowledge on the benefits of RCT was low.

The overall findings indicated that the women of reproductive age in Kimaanya village had a positive attitude towards RCT, although the respondents believed that there was fear for RCT and HIV testing and that RCT increases rejection, stigma, discrimination and violence in homes.

### **Recommendations**

Village health teams (VHT's) should be empowered with information and facilities so that they can be able to provide continuous health education to their communities about the significance of RCT as a health policy implemented by the government of Uganda and continuously eradicate the myths attributed to RCT and HIV counseling and testing so as to improve the community's attitudes about the health policy.