

**FERTILITY DESIRES AND INTENTIONS OF HIV POSITIVE MEN AND WOMEN
AGED 15-49 ATTENDING HIV CARE AT SELECTED HEALTH FACILITIES IN
ASWA GULU DISTRICT**

BY

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(CLARKE-2021-74)

**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF POLICY
AND**

HEALTH MANAGEMENT OF CLARKE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN

PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS

PUBLIC HEALTH

DECEMBER 2021

Studies from different contexts worldwide indicate fertility desires of people living with HIV/AIDS have become a public health challenge, this is for both developed / rich countries like USA and non-developed or limited resource setting countries like in Sub Sahara Africa both indicate HIV infected men and women have fertility desires and intentions, yet HIV is known to be the major cause of death in women of reproductive age in the world and there is limited evidence pertaining the fertility desire of HIV positive women receiving HIV care in Uganda. This has shown controversial results with regard to whether childbearing desire and intention are changed after the expansion of ART and PMTCT services, however the intake of EMTCT services in the remote setting like Aswa is seem to be hard. This was justified by studies in 2011 in several HIV clinics across Northern Uganda indicates that only 24% of male respondents and 19% of female respondents said they wanted more Children and some Scanty information indicates that those desires to stop child bearing among PLHIV was 6.25 times greater among HIV infected men and women compared to HIV negative. This calls for a lot of interventions to put in place otherwise HIV positive men and women will die with pain of not being able to produce a child or fear of producing HIV infected children. The Objective was to determine factors affecting fertility desires and intention of HIV positive men and women living in Aswa Gulu District and the implications of HIV transmission in regard to MTCT of HIV and public Health Practices. And to address three research questions: What are the individual factors affecting fertility desires and intentions of HIV positive men and women of Aswa Health sub district? What are the partner factors affecting fertility desires of HIV positive men and women in selected health facilities in Aswa Health sub district? What is the level of integration of family planning services with HIV programs at selected health facilities

in Aswa Health sub district? This study contributes to the understanding of the ongoing changes in fertility desire among PLHIV in Uganda and other developing countries that realized significant improvement in the life expectancy of HIV/AIDS patients

Methods

Cross sectional study design was used because it was appropriate for both quantitative and qualitative research, because it measures both exposure and effects at the same time. Sample size was determined using Yamane formulae, valid primary data was collected using well designed and structured questionnaire with adequate sample size 184 respondents as well as key informants interview guides were used to collect data on qualitative finding especially to quantify the prevalence of females and males who had fertility desire and intention. Since it was too expensive and time consuming to contact every individual in the study population, quotas sampling technique was used to recruit representative sample of the population from a sampling frame prepared from patients list that are on appointment on the date of data collection by use of fixed quotas. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Inc ©) database and were cleaned and checked for errors and analyzed using SPSS© Statistics Version 19 for Windows. Univariate, Bivariate and multivariate analysis were conducted to determine statistical association between Key independent and dependent Variable. Ethical approval was obtained from Clarke international University research Ethics committee.

Results

In this study 184 participants were interviewed, the majority 66(35.9%) of the respondents were between the age of 25-34, majority 136(74%) of the respondents were female and males

constituted only 26%. In term of Ethnic group involved in this study, Acholi Contributed 97.3% follow by Buganda 11%. The rest being Banyakole 0.5%, Busoga 0.5% and Lango 0.5%. The respondents outlined the reasons for desiring to have children included, desire of the partner to have children, having no children before confirmation with HIV, some believed that they can still have HIV negative children. Most of the respondents were from rural setting which accounts to 165(89.7%), while urban population contributed only 19(10.3%) respondents living in urban areas were less likely to have fertility desires and intention to have children compared to those living in rural areas and there was statistically significant relationship between residence and fertility desires and intentions to have children (uOR =0.31 95%CI=0.178-0.537, p=0.001*). More than half 72(52.9%) of the females had the desire to have children, while half 24(50.0%) of the male respondents equally had the desire and as well no desire to have children. The majority 157(85%) of the respondents had already disclosed their HIV status to their partners, while 27(15%) of the respondents did not disclose their HIV status to partners, the study had shown that all respondents had started ARTS and there was no statistically significant relationship between being on ARTS and having fertility desires for children. and more than half 95(53.4%) of the respondents had improved conditions after starting ARTs. However, there was not statistically significant relationship between changes in clients condition and fertility desires and intention to have children (uOR=0.70, 95% CI=0.326-1.494, p=0.354) (See table 5).

Conclusion

This study has served to give some high light to HIV clinic offering an integrated sexual and reproductive health services and suggest the involvement of partner in reproductive health need and counseling inclusively since a majority of PLHIV are of reproductive age. This cross-sectional facility-based study which was conducted to determine factors affecting fertility desires and intention of HIV positive men and women living in Aswa Gulu District is associated with ART experience, sex, age, marital status, the number of children, educational level and the implications of HIV transmission in regard to MTCT of HIV and public Health Practices. Basing on the above findings and conclusions some recommendations had been established, **To the Health care workers.** Health care worker, should encourage free interaction with PLHIV on their fertility issues. **To the researcher.** The researcher recommended that more study should be conducted to focus on urban population because only 19 participants where from urban areas which account to only 10.3%. **To the Policy Makers.** Since 58% male and 47% female participants expressed desire for future children, hence the researcher recommend 2nstrategy for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV