

## ABSTRACT

Uganda is currently facing a high HIV prevalence rate in the general population and about 2 million people are living with HIV. It is projected that 357,000 of the people living with HIV is in need of antiretroviral therapy yet only 180,974 are on ARVs (by March 2009). The demand for ARVs is reported to be overwhelming the few HIV clinics in the country resulting in overcrowding and long queues. These problems raise high suspicion of long waiting times which is likely to deter patients from continuing to utilize ART services from the clinics leading to poor adherence to their regimen and poor health outcomes for the patients, and it is this reason that prompted a study to assess the influence of patient waiting time on the utilization of HIV/AIDS treatment /ART in the outpatient department of Butabika Hospital of Kampala district.

Using a descriptive cross sectional study design, 203 questionnaires were researcher administered to PLWAs who had been enrolled and benefiting from HI/AIDS treatment (HAART) for the period of more than six months with a purpose of assessing the influence of patient waiting time on utilization of ART and to specifically determine the factors that influence utilization of ART, determine the influence of clinic operation hours on utilization of ART services, examine the influence of patient scheduling of appointment on utilization of ART services and determine the actual time spent in each clinic and its influence on utilization of ART, it was found and concluded that whereas several factors were found to be affecting the use of ART services pertinent amongst which is the long waiting time, conflicting obligations, transport and out of pocket expenses, negligence of health workers and the negative attitude of health workers, Clinic operation hours influences the utilization of ARTs in a way that where the opening and closing hours are not convenient, a large proportion of HIV/AIDS patients miss ART services and is true vice versa.

This is understood as negligence of duty by the health workers and cause dissatisfaction among patients and they end not utilizing services such as laboratory investigations, adherence counseling and instead of waiting to be seen by the doctor, they prefer being represented by friends or relatives Besides inconvenient patient scheduling of appointment influence utilization of some services amongst which is adherence to counseling, doctor consultation, Laboratory investigation and dispensing of medications as they are foregone by the patients, as found in the study that the longer the patient revisit schedule, the higher the level of failure to attend the scheduled ART service.

An association exists between client waiting time in the clinic and utilization of ART services. Based on the study findings and the objectives the study therefore recommends that besides opening the clinic at fixed and convenient times and strictly adheres to those times, there is a need to introduce an appointment system that gives patients freedom to arrive at any time of the clinic day.