

## ABSTRACT

The study was conducted to investigate the factors influencing adherence to ART among children aged 1-12yrs at Ntara Health Centre IV, Kitagwenda County, Kamwngwe District. The study was a cross sectional survey of 237 caregivers seeking treatment for their children at Ntara Health Centre IV.

The guiding objective for this study were how social, economic and demographic factors of the caregivers, health facility factors and enabling factors influence ART adherence among children aged 1-12years. The general objectives of the study was to determine factors influencing ART adherence among 237 paediatric patients aged 1-12years in Ntara Health Centre IV (Ntara Sub county).

The data used for the study was gathered primarily from the 237 caregivers through the use of an interview questionnaire and analyzed descriptively. However, caution was taken in the results presented in this report since they would have been influenced by sampling bias as participants were selected as they came without regard to randomization. The study found that of the 237 caregivers interviewed at Ntra Health Centre IV who were seeking treatment (ART), only 62% of their children adhered to ARVs which was the lower percentage compared to the Ministry of Health Percentage (95%).

As well, the study found the social demographic factors of caregivers (married OR=4.7, CI=1.71-13.1, P=0.003), separated/divorced (OR=10.6, CI=3.44-32.8, P<0.001), Widowed (OR=4.11, CI=1.41-11.8, P=0.009) Parity of more than four children (OR=2.58, CI=1.524.42, P=0.001) and Family size of more than six people (OR=4.65, CI=2.5928.33, P<0.001). None of demographic factors of children was found to influence adherence to ART. Health facility factors: distance beyond 5Km from the health facility, 6-10km (OR=2.94, CI=1.45-5.95, P=0.003). Beyond 10km (OR=6.68, CI=3.36-13.26, P<0.001). Health Workers with indifferent attitudes towards patients: (OR=0.22, CI=0.10-0.48, P<0.001), unavailability of Health Workers at the health facility: (OR=0.14, CI=0.05-0.34, P<0.001) and unavailability of drugs at the health facility: OR=0.19, CI=0.09-0.42, P<0.001) were significantly found to be associated with adherence to ART among children aged 1-12years.

Enabling factors: Not being a member of support group (OR=0.15, CI=0.08-0.29, P<0.001) and a child with history of side effects to ART (OR=0.27, CI=0.12-0.62, P=0.002) were associated with adherence ART. The level of adherence was moderately low and factors associated with level of adherence were marital status, family size, parity of caregivers, distance, attitude of health workers, availability of health workers and drugs, being a member of support group and experiencing side effects.

In recommendation, the government should step up efforts to scale-up ART services in all health centers so that children do not get problems of accessing ART services. The Government should also employ more Health workers and stock health centers to better deal with children on ART.