

## Introduction

Globally, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS stands at 35.3 million among those living with HIV (WHO, 2013) yet ever since the beginning of the epidemic almost 75 million people have been infected with HIV and about 36 million people have died of the disease. In Uganda, currently, the prevalence rate of HIV stands at 7.2% (UNAIDS 2012). As a result a significant number of couples involved in sexual relationships are sero discordant which means that one of the two partners in a sexual relationship is HIV positive. Failure by sero discordant couples to adopt safer sex practices has resulted into increased transmission of HIV among couples.

The broad objective of the study was to determine the factors influencing the adoption of safer sex practices among sero discordant couples at Kasangati HIV/AIDS research center in the month of July 2014.

The specific objectives included; to establish the level of adoption of safer sex practices among sero discordant couples; to find out the attitude of sero discordant couples towards the adoption of safer sex practices; to determine the socio-economic factors influencing the adoption of safer sex practices among sero discordant couples and to determine health system factors influencing the adoption of safer sex practices among sero discordant couples.

## Methodology

The study was a cross-sectional study involving 206 HIV sero-discordant couples who were selected using purposive sampling which is a non-random sampling technique of sero discordant couples at Kasangati HIV/AIDS research center. A semi-structured questionnaire was used as a research tool to collect data from the respondents in the study.

## Results

xii The level of adoption of safer sex practices was high at 89% of the respondents. The attitude of the respondents towards the adoption of safer sex practices was good as the respondents were positive towards the prevention of the transmission of HIV/AIDS from the HIV positive partner to the negative one. The socio-demographic factors influencing the adoption of safer sex practices

among sero discordant couples ( $p < 0.05$ ) were found to be the sex of the partner ( $p = 0.012$ ), level of education ( $p = 0.010$ ) and the estimated average monthly income (0.004). The health facility factors influencing the adoption of safer sex practices were the affordability ( $p = 0.014$ ) of and accessibility ( $p = 0.026$ ) to health care services and products such as condoms which are necessary in the practice of safer sex.

## Conclusion

The level of adoption of safer sex practices among sero-discordant couples was found to be high. Most of the respondents had adopted safer sex practices such as the use of a condom whenever they were having sexual intercourse, use of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) and the consistent use of Antiretroviral drugs. However, there are hindrances to the adoption of safer sex practices which included the dislike for condoms; desire to enjoy sex, need for children and the perception that in marriage there is no need for safe sex practices. Therefore, all stakeholders concerned with the prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission should conduct continuous health education so as to sensitize couples on the importance of safe sex practices in the prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission. This will reduce the transmission of HIV and morbidity and mortality rates related to HIV/AIDS.