



Service uptake among HIV positive youth on the rise

Programme theme: **Uptake SRHR Services**

Country: **Kenya**

Tags: **Uptake SRHR Services; YPLHIV; PHDP; Stigma; Treatment literacy; Sexual violence**

'Positive Health, Dignity and Prevention' (PHDP) is a new UN-approved human rights-based policy framework, which helps people living with HIV lead a complete and healthy life and reduce the risk of transmission of the virus to others. In 2014, the Kenyan MAXFACTA Youth Group conducted a study to determine how PHDP principles were translated into existing programmes for young HIV positive people. The results show that HIV positive youth is well informed about the treatment they need and how to find it. Problems such as (the fear of) stigma and discrimination, and not knowing where to go with their concerns or complaints still remain.

Out of 270 respondents, an impressive 97% were aware of the benefits of regularly attending clinics for follow-up care and support services. They also said they do have access to HIV-testing services, psychosocial support and uninterrupted supplies of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs. However, treatment literacy is a problem, as some respondents reported sharing ARVs with their peers.

Pregnancy alert

Another optimistic finding is that, to a large extent, health providers are providing positive SRHR messages to young HIV positive people, including their right to have sex. Yet it appears that health workers do not always include pregnancy prevention in their sessions with youth. Almost 40% reported to have no knowledge at all about pregnancy prevention and less conventional services, such as safe abortion and post-abortion care.

Fear of stigma

Disclosing one's HIV status to another person often carries with it fear of stigma, especially in relation to (sexual) partners. Young people are much more likely to share their HIV status with a health worker or family member than with their partner. Many of them are afraid their partner would leave them if they disclose their HIV status. Disclosure to health workers, school management, friends or family is also considered embarrassing but, at the same time, young people are quite convinced they receive support after they open up about their HIV status.

However, when faced with discrimination, or even outright violence, only few file a legal complaint. This number is even lower when it concerns intimate partner violence against HIV positive young women, due to lack of knowledge about their rights as well as shame about their situation.

Facts about the research

Where?

Nairobi, Coast, Western Kenya

By whom?

- MAXFACTA Youth Group
- Nephak
- Population Council
- Global Network of People Living with HIV (GNP+)

For whom?

Young people living with HIV (12 -24 years old)

Scope of the research

270 young people (mainly HIV positive) participated in the baseline survey, by responding to questionnaires.

Recommendations

- Improve the content, understandability and the delivery of treatment literacy programme for young HIV positive people.
- Improve knowledge about and access to pregnancy prevention, safe abortion and post abortion care among young HIV positive people.
- Train young HIV positive people on the principles of PHDP to enable them to claim their rights when in relationships, such as the principle of shared responsibility in HIV prevention.
- Create awareness about PHDP and human rights, by promoting observance of PHDP and human rights among YPLWHIV themselves, service providers, parents, teachers, and opinion leaders.
- Educate and raise awareness among YPLHIV about their rights and facilitate their access to legal services for recourse.

