Reaching Out To Men In Soweto
Through A Community-Based VCT Approach

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Background

• Historically, relatively few men volunteered for HIV Counseling and Testing (VCT) in Soweto, South Africa.

• An indication of the situation:
  – Between March 2003 and October 2006, Project Accept surveyed 14,818 participants in 48 communities across 5 sites in 4 countries on prior VCT uptake.
  – compared to non-testers …
    • Testers in Zimbabwe were as likely to be men or women;
    • Testers in Vulindlela, SA were twice as likely to be women;
    • Testers in Tanzania were 2.5 times as likely to be women;
    • Testers in Thailand were almost 3 times as likely to be women; and,
    • Testers in Soweto, SA, were nearly 5 times as likely to be women.
Background

- Project Accept is a community-randomized controlled trial with an intervention which includes community mobilization, community-based voluntary counseling and testing (CBVCT), and post-test support services.
Methods

• Project Accept offered CBVCT in 4 Soweto communities.
• Administrative and HIV serology data, from July 2006 to December 2010, were analyzed to assess uptake and HIV rates.
Results

- 20,304 participants were offered VCT in 3.5 year period
- 20,100 (99.0%) agreed to have rapid on site testing in a mobile unit with pre-test and post-test counseling.
- The median age for both genders were 28 years.
Results

- Of those tested, 10,177 (50%) were women and 10,127 (50%) were men.
Results

• 33% (n=6,605) of all participants reported never having taken an HIV test before.
• Of these, 59% were men.
Results

- Overall, of all participants tested, 1830 (9%) were sero-positive for HIV.
- More women (n=1,117, 11%) tested positive than men (n=713, 7%); (p<0.0001).
Results

- In all women who had never tested, 35% tested HIV sero-positive.
- In all men who had never tested, 52% tested HIV sero-positive (p<0.0001).
Results

- HIV prevalence by year
Conclusion

1) Men are less likely than women to access standard VCT. (perhaps make comment that women in this age group may have accessed VCT through PMTCT)

2) Project Accept community-based VCT shows similar VCT uptake between women and men in Soweto, but increased uptake as compared to standard VCT

3) The high prevalence of HIV among first-time testers, particularly men, indicates that community-based approach seems effective in reaching previously unreachable men.
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