

A multidisciplinary approach for enhancing quality HIV testing in Murang'a prison

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Background: Suboptimal coordination between service providers in different departments in the prison facility have been reported to contribute towards poor quality of service, low numbers of patients tested for HIV and unfavorable clinical outcomes among HIV patients. Multidisciplinary efforts have been shown to improve the quality of patient care the in various settings, resulting in improved quality of patient care.

Objective: To evaluate the uptake of HIV testing services in Murang'a prison health facility following a multi-disciplinary intervention to sensitize health care workers.

Method: Between January and April 2016, Transforming TB & HIV Prevention, Care and Treatment (TACT) team partnered with Murang'a County and disseminated data on the number of tested clients versus outpatient workload. Adequate supplies of rapid test kits were provided to the health facility. Health care workers sensitized potential clients on the benefits of knowledge of HIV status and facilitated referrals to the laboratory or HIV testing services (HTS) department for testing. Staff in the laboratory and HTS departments were available to counsel and test clients promptly upon receiving referrals. Pharmacy staff further sensitized clients on HTS while dispensing medication. We compared the proportion of clients tested over the three months prior to the intervention versus those tested over a similar period after the start of the intervention.

Results: The Murang'a prison health facility attends to approximately 2,400 clients per month, including newly admitted inmates. Between October 2015 and December 2015, 381 (15.9%) of the estimated outpatient clients were tested, while 605 (25.2%) were tested between February and April 2016, representing a 59% increase in the testing rate. However the yield of positive cases declined from 3.9% over the pre-intervention period to 2.9% following the intervention. Health care providers at all entry points reported an improvement in teamwork during the intervention.

Conclusion: Teamwork among health care service providers led to increasing number of clients tested for HIV thus identifying more HIV positive clients.