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EXPANDING HIV IDENTIFICATION BY TESTING CONTACTS OF DECEASED HIV INDEX CLIENTS

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BACKGROUND

- Retrospective hospital data can be used to improve HIV programs in Tanzania.
- Overall HIV prevalence for Tanzania Mainland is estimated at 5.1% (4.8 – 5.5)
  - –Male 3.5% (3.2 – 4.0)
  - –Female 5.1% (4.8 – 5.5)

According to Tanzania HIV Impact survey 2016/17), only 61% of all people living with HIV (PLHIV) know their status in the first 90. Closing the gap in identification, accelerated testing approaches are required. Index HIV testing is an optimized HIV testing modality, aimed at accelerating progress towards UNAIDS first 90, which targets identification of undiagnosed HIV infected individuals through testing of sexual contacts, and biological children of index PLHIV. There is, however, a missed opportunity in reaching contacts of deceased HIV clients. In October 2018, THPS extended index testing initiative (TEI) was designed, an innovation where sexual contacts and biological children of deceased PLHIV were reached and given opportunity to test for HIV infection.

METHODS

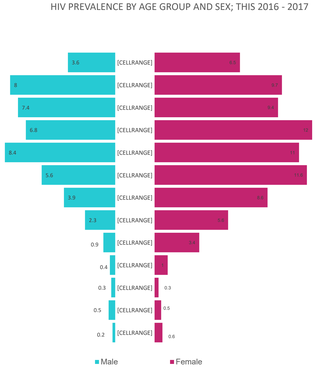
THPS in collaboration with local Government authority in the two regions identified facilities supported. The main aim was to expand HIV positive clients identification, through testing index contacts of deceased HIV positive clients.

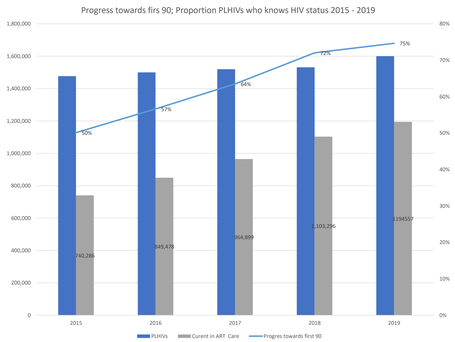
- Details of deceased HIV clients, at 24 supported health facilities in Kigoma (15) and Pwani (9) regions were accessed through CTC2 cards and HIV status of sexual partners, treatment supporter's mobile number and home address documented. Peer educators contacted sexual partners through mobile phone and arranged home visits for HIV testing sensitization and education. HIV testing was performed by healthcare providers.

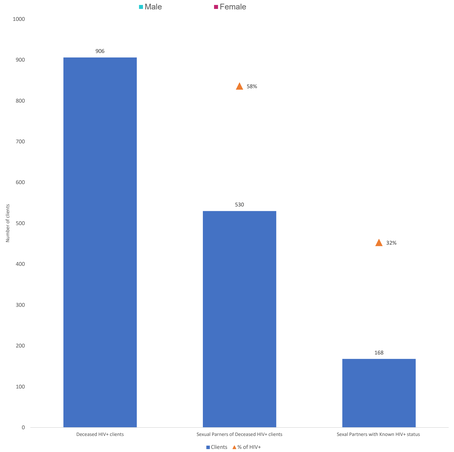
A total of 362 sexual partners had unknown HIV status, 233 (64%) were reached for HIV testing whereby 45 (19%) were newly identified HIV positive.

RESULTS

- Index testing is currently the major testing modality in Tanzania whereby a lot of new HIV positive identification is being done. Through the same process THPS was able to use retrospective method by tracing files of the deceased to find sexual partners through community HTS programs.
- A total of 906 archived files of deceased HIV clients were reviewed and a list of 530 sexual partners extracted, among whom 168 (32%) had known HIV status.







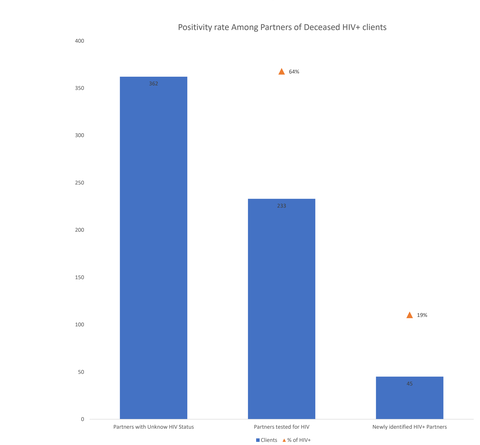




Photo: Client Maria Richard reached for HIV testing

CONCLUSION

There is an opportunity to expand HIV identification from deceased HIV clients. Correct contact information documentation improves tracing of index contacts. We recommend scale up of this initiative to reach potential groups of HIV infected individuals such as contacts of deceased clients.

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