

Factors for Low Uptake of Antiretroviral Therapy Among Pregnant Women Living with HIV in Mbeya City Council in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Background

The world anticipated reaching 90 per cent antiretroviral therapy uptake by 2015. However, despite free provision of antiretroviral therapy to pregnant women living with HIV, still the uptake remains low. This study evaluated factors for low uptake of antiretroviral therapy among pregnant women living with HIV in Mbeya City Council.

Methods

The study used cross section descriptive design. 44 pregnant women on antiretroviral therapy and 12 health providers were conveniently selected. 4 key informants were purposive selected. Review of data; in-depth interviews with clients and key informants; exit interviews with clients; and observation for health providers were conducted. Audio tape recording from in-depth interviews was transcribed into Swahili to English. Social ecological framework used in data coding based on individual, social and health service factors then analysed using Atlas. ti 7, while quantitative data were analysed using excel sheet.

Results

The findings from interviews showed the main individual factors (such as treatment related side effects and faith believes in God); Social factors (like traditional medicine and lack of partner/husband support) and health service factors (such as long waiting time for service and privacy) were more likely to cause low uptake of ART. Findings from observation for service provider showed that discrepancy in information given to clients during adherence counseling on antiretroviral therapy was more likely in contributing to low uptake of antiretroviral therapy.

Conclusion

This study indicates that various factors at individual, social and health service levels were more likely to cause clients to stop antiretroviral therapy resulting to low uptake. However reasons for discrepancy information during counseling by providers remain a question, which needs further researching. The study recommends regular supervision to cover checking of data, in plant walkthrough and client exit interview to capture relevant information given to clients for raising uptake of antiretroviral therapy.

Keywords: *Antiretroviral therapy, low ART uptake, HIV and AIDS, Tanzania*