ADDRESSING THE FAMILY PLANNING NEEDS OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV IN GHANA: A COMMUNITY-FACILITY PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

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Background and Significance

- Antiretroviral therapy helps people living with HIV (PLHIV) lead healthier, longer lives.
- PLHIV need quality family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) services.
  - Family planning helps PLHIV:
    - Reduce risk of HIV transmission to partners (condoms only)
    - Prevent unintended pregnancies
    - Plan desired pregnancies to reduce risk of mother-to-child HIV transmission

“Family Planning for Healthy Living” Project

(July 2007 – May 2008)

Implemented in 4 regions in Ghana by the ACQUIRE Project/EngenderHealth, Quality Health Partners and other in-country partners

Objectives

1. Incorporate awareness of family planning for PLHIV into community activities
2. Increase use of family planning, if desired, among HIV-positive men and women

Project Interventions

FP Provider Trainings

July/August 2007
- Stigma reduction training & CTU for 19 FP providers from 8 referral facilities

Peer Educator Trainings

July/August 2007
- FP-HIV training curriculum developed
- 75 members from 43 PLHIV support groups trained in FP messaging and referral

Job Aids/BCC Materials

Developed July 2007
- Contraceptive chart
- Sample FP method card
- Client brochure

Regional Quarterly Meetings

2007-2008
3 meetings of peer educators and providers in each region

Tasks

Peer Educators

- Talk about FP at support groups
- Refer peers for FP services

Providers

- Provide FP services to PLHIV
- Attend support groups to strengthen linkages with PLHIV community

Assessment Methodology

- Baseline survey (n=180) in 34 HIV support groups
- Endline assessment
  - Endline survey (n=235) among 12 selectively sampled HIV support groups
  - Focus group discussions with peer educators (n=32) and FP providers (n=9)
  - Review of program reports, peer educator activity logs, and other program documents
  - Collection of champion stories

Findings: Peer educators and providers work together to support FP

PEER EDUCATORS

Previously I did not believe in FP but the training has corrected a lot of misconceptions.
—Peer educator, Ashanti Region

At the training I got to know that PLHIV have the right to FP services and if we denied them they could face unwanted pregnancies and HIV re-infection. I got to know exactly what I should do for them.
—Service provider, Western Region

Findings: Increased awareness and understanding of FP among PLHIV

Findings: Family planning use among PLHIV

- FP method mix expanded to include long-acting methods

Lessons Learned

- Support peer educators through adequate training and supervision
- Ensure trained provider coverage of HIV support groups and facilities
- Foster peer educator-provider partnerships for referrals
- Identify champions to advocate for FP and promote scale-up
- Address barriers to FP uptake: stigma, transport costs, myths/misperceptions

Acknowledgements

USAID/W and USAID/Ghana
ACQUIRE Project and Quality Health Partners (QHP)/EngenderHealth
Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI)
Catholic Relief Services Community Care Support Project (CRS/OMCE/USAID)
Strengthening HIV/AIDS Response Partnership (SMARP)

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