

REPORT ON THE HIV/AIDS SENSITIZATION AND SCREENING ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AT THE FANTEAKWA SOUTH DISTRICT, 2022

Executive Summary

Ghana AIDS Commission is a body established under the Chairmanship of H. E. the president of Ghana by Act 2016, Act 938 of the Parliament

HIV/AIDs over the past years keeps increasing gradually at the rate of 1.5 across the nation. Current survey done by the Ghana Aids Commissions shows that, a total number of 346,120 people are HIV/AIDs positive, out of which, 228,439 (66%) are females while 117, 681 (34%) are males.

Prior to the above issues, the Commission has established its sub offices at the Regional and District levels spear headed by the Technical Support Units and the Focal Persons respectively; to monitor activities and keep tacks records of HIV/AIDs situations in the respective areas across the country.

On keeping records of the pandemic in the sub-offices, a regular sensitization and screening exercises are carried out in communities, schools, churches, mosques, market squares, lorry station among other places to ensure people get tested to know their status. It is recommended that, persons between the ages of 13 to 64 get tested to know their status at least one every year.

As such, one major solution meted out to HIV/AIDS patients is taking drugs called the Antiretroviral therapy as part of routine health care for these patients.

By sensitizing and screening the people and giving them health care would minimize the spread of the virus.

This year, the theme for the 2022 World Aids Day celebration is, “*Equalizing Multi-Sectoral HIV response*”, with the aim of wooing the support of all stakeholders including corporate organizations to ensure the HIV AIDS pandemic was eradicated by the year 2030.

The Fanteakwa South District Assembly seized the opportunity to organized its sensitization and screening of HIV/AIDs programme at Ehiamenkyene Presbyterian and Church of Pentecost, Nsutem Senior High School and climax it during the 2022 Farmers’ Day celebration.

1. Introduction

As part of the core mandate to reducing the spread of HIV/AIDs in the country, a medical team, together with the Focal Person of the Fanteakwa South District organized a sensitization and screening exercise at the Nustem Senior High and Technical School on Thursday, 17th November, 2022 at the Assembly Hall. A total of Seven hundred students (700) were sensitized and One Hundred and Forty-six (146) students were screened.

2. Sensitization of Students

The sensitization took the form of interaction session among the health team, teachers and students. The students were asked the full meaning of HIV/AIDS. It was answered as Human Immuno-deficiency Virus while AIDS is Acquired Immune Deficiencies. The Focal Person detailed that, HIV transforms into AIDS. She added that at the HIV stage, symptoms do not show on the human however, at the AIDS stage, symptoms show clearly.

The students were again engaged in the causes of HIV/AIDS and mentioned that, sexual intercourse, mother-to-child transmission, blood transmission, through infected objects like syringe, sharp objects among others. The students also identified symptoms as fever, persistent increase in body temperature, diarrhea, rashes, fever, weight loss, sore in the throat.

On preventive measures, the students were advised to abstain from any sexual intercourse which has a probability of being infected with the virus, this will enable them fulfill their dream.

They were also informed that, HIV/AIDs patients are put on health care, given drugs called Antiretroviral therapy which boost the immune system of the patients by fighting against the virus in the bloodstream. Persons put on the drugs look ten times healthier than people without the virus.

On stigma, students were advised not to make mockery of persons living with HIV/AIDs.

Questions and Answers

1. A student asked whether prostitutes give HIV/AIDS although they wear condoms?
 - The students were made to understand that, if an infected HIV/AIDS patient wears condoms but during sexual intercourse and the condom accidentally breaks, the virus stays in the bloodstream of the negative person within a period of 1 to 4 weeks (the development stage of HIV)
2. Another student asked whether the ART makes the breast bigger?
 - The drugs do not make the breast bigger but it makes the patients look healthier than before.



Students of Nsutech answering questions during the sensitization session



Students of Nsutech listening attentively during HIV/AIDS sensitization



A session of Nsutech students waiting for their turn to be counselled and screened



Screening of Nsutech students



Screening of Nsutech students at the school premises

Outcome of the Screening

A total of One Hundred forty-six (146) students were screened, however, a male student tested positive to the virus after a series of test were conducted on him. The student was taken through counselling and was put on drug immediately. The student will receive further treatment at the ART clinic at the Osino Health Centre.

Conclusion

The programme was a successful one. Students willingly tested to know their status, however, test kits provided by the health facility were not enough to screen 500⁺ students

SENSITIZATION ON THE EFFECTS OF HIV/AIDS AT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA, AND THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST- EHIAMENKENE

1. Introduction

As part of the 2022 World Aids Day celebration, a medical team led by the HIV/AIDS Focal Person organized a sensitization exercise at the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Pentecost, Ehiamenkyene on **Sunday, 20th November, 2022.**

It was organized to create awareness on the effects, causes, symptoms, mother-to-child transmissions and also preventive measures to be taken to protect one from contracting the HIV/AIDS.

Two (3) languages Twi, Krobo and English were medium of translation used during the sensitization.

In total, One Hundred and fifty (150) congregants were sensitized.

2. Overview of the Virus in the Fanteakwa South District.

Mr. Ernest Hungbedzi, a health professional informed the congregants about the HIV/AIDS in the district. It was indicated that, in Eastern region, the pandemic is noted to be highest at Somanya followed by Osino. He added that, it takes four (4) weeks for the virus to fully develop in HIV while it takes a period of ten (10) years to develop into AIDS, which is the deteriorating stage. At that stage, symptoms begin to show clearly.

3. Education on HIV/AIDS

Ms. Portia Dede, a staff of Ghana Health Service, noted that, the HIV-Human Immunodeficiency Virus first attacks the immune system of the individual and if care is not taken, the Virus migrate into AIDS. She added that, at the level, the human immune system becomes weak and symptoms begin to show clearly on the human body.

Ms. Portia Dede further noted that, it was mandatory to conduct tests on pregnant women whereas it is not mandatory for other people. She pointed out that, pregnant women do not visit the facility when they contract the virus. Furthermore to that, pregnant women who are reactive to the virus after delivery are advised not to breastfeed their babies for some period of time.

It was stated that, when at the HIV stage for the next 10 years without a person being put on drugs, it develops into AIDS.

4. Symptoms of HIV/AIDS

- ✓ Fever
- ✓ Increase in body temperature
- ✓ Rashes
- ✓ Frequent diarrhea
- ✓ Persistent headache
- ✓ Body weakness
- ✓ Weight loss
- ✓ Sore in the throat

5. Causes of HIV/AIDS

Ms. Portia Dede outlined the causes as follows:

- ✓ Through mother-to-child transmission
- ✓ Through blood transmission

- ✓ Through sexual intercourse
- ✓ Through infected objects like syringe, sharp object

The Health Professional also communicated that, the virus is not contracted through bathing, hugging, eating together with a reactant.

6. **Preventive Measures**

She advised that, one should **Abstain** from sex, **Be** faithful to their partners, and the use of **Condom**- as simple as ABC. She also advised that, one would not know if they have the virus unless they test for the virus and voiced out that, individual should test to know their status.

7. **ART (Anti-Retroviral Therapy) Treatment**

Mr. Ernest Hungbedzi, a Health personnel informed the congregation that, HIV/AIDS patients are being put on ART drugs. The drugs, which he explained is given to the patients either on monthly bases, weekly bases enough due to their proximity to the ART clinic. He outlined that, the district has an ART clinic at the Osino Health centre and patients receive treatments.

He further stated that, the drugs which goes a long way to suppress the virus enables spouse who are negative and positive to the virus stay together and make babies without the child getting infected.

8. **Stigmatization**

The Focal Person, spoke on stigmatization being a common thing among people in the society. However, it was against the law to disclose their status to the society unless they do so by themselves. She advised that, we should not laugh at them, disassociate ourselves from them, but rather, they are part of the society and as such needed to be accorded with respect and treated well.

9. **Questions & Answers**

1. A member asked why the drugs are being taken if it cannot cure the virus?

- The Focal person replied that, there is no cure for the virus, however the, drug when taken, suppresses the virus and boost the immune systems of the person. She also added that, such people look more healthier than people without the virus. Notwithstanding that, the drugs prolong the years of the patients. However, patients who refuse to take in the drugs die quickly and easily.

2. Why women are more vulnerable to the virus than men?

- The health personnel stated that, women are prone to the virus than the men because the virus stays in the semen of men which is easily transmitted to women and develops faster in them than men.

Also, one man can transmit the virus to more than 1 woman through sexual intercourse

3. Another member asked why the facility do not inform the spouse about the status of their partner?

- Mr. Ernest Hungbedzi detailed that, tests carried out is confidential however, the reactive partner can inform the partner about it. He said such scenario could lead to divorce so, the facility, as a matter of urgency will put the patient on the drug to avoid transmitting to the partner.

4. Another person asked how people contract the virus through infected objects?

- It was stated that, the virus takes a period of 4 weeks to develop into HIV. So, the virus stays on an infected object for 4 weeks beyond that, the virus dies off. So, during the period of 4 weeks and the infected object cut a negative person, the virus get into the blood stream.

5. Do we have a law that arrest people of stigmatization?

Ms. Portia Hungbedzi noted that, the patients can sue the health facility for disclosing their status, that is why the test results are confidential and not supposed to be disclosed to anybody.

6. Another person inquires of the lifespan of the virus in the infected person?

- The Focal Person indicated that, the virus stays inside the bloodstream till the patients die. So, the ART drugs help to boost the immune systems of the patients which enables them to live a little longer.

7. How was HIV/AIDS discovered?

- It was discovered in chimpanzees in Central African Republic



The HIV/AIDS Focal Person giving a talk on HIV/AIDS at the Presbyterian Church-Ehiamenkyene





Congregants of the Church of Pentecost listening to a talk from the Health Professionals



A member of the Church of Pentecost asking question

Conclusion

The team seized the opportunity to invite the church congregants to the Famers' Day celebration which comes off at the Roman Catholic School park, Ehiamenkyene on **Friday, 25th November, 2022** where there would be HIV/AIDS screening and other tests.

**REPORT ON SENSITIZATION AND SCREENING EXERCISE ON THE EFFECTS OF
HIV/AIDS CARRIED OUT DURING THE 38TH FARMERS DAY CELEBRATION AT- EHIAMENKENE
ON 25TH, NOVEMBER, 2022**

1. Introduction

As part of the 2022 World AIDs Day celebration on the topic,

To climax the 2022 World AIDs Day celebration, a medical team led by the HIV/AIDS Focal Person of the district organized a sensitization and screening exercises during the 38th Farmers Day celebration which took place at Ehiamenkyene on **Friday, 25th November, 2022.**

It was organized to create awareness on the effects, causes, symptoms, mother-to-child transmissions and also preventive measures to be taken to protect one from contracting the HIV/AIDS.

Two (3) languages Twi, Krobo and English were medium of translation used during the sensitization.

In total, 98 people were sensitized and Twenty-eight (28) people were tested.

2. Screening and Sensitization

The people were taken through counseling on the effect HIV/AIDs. People were taken through the causes, effects, symptoms, and the preventive measures. The people were also taken through the ART drugs given to HIV/AIDs patients. In addition, they were also educated on stigma prevention.

At the end of the programme, 28 people were screened and more than 90 people were sensitized.

Constraints

Willingness to get tested: During the course of the screening process, the students were unwilling to be screened due to fear and panic of being pronounced HIV⁺. This led to the decrease in number of people who got tested. However, the citizenry was encouraged to get tested in order to know their status so as to prevent the spread of the virus.

Conclusion

The programme was successful; however, the people were not willing to be screened, in addition, language barrier was an issue since most of the inhabitants use the Krobo language.



Ms. Portia Dede, giving a talk on HIV/AIDS and its effects during the 38th Farmers' Day Celebration, Ehiamenkyene



Health professionals taking people through sensitization and screening at Ehiamenkyene



People waiting for their HIV/AIDS test results-Ehiamenkyene



The HIV/AIDS Focal Person taking her turn to test for the virus



Health Professionals at the Ehiamenkyene R/C park