Retention and associated factors among HIV patients enrolled on ART through Assisted Partner Notification Services at Lira Regional Referral Hospital

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Background: Assisted Partner Notification is a public health strategy used to curb the spread of STIs and HIV/AIDS through testing and treating sexual partners of infected index cases and ensuring their retention in care. Retention of PLHIVs in LRRH still remains a challenge attributed to patients relocating to other places, forgetfulness, long distance, denial of treatment among others. Objective: to assess the level of retention and associated factors among HIV patients enrolled on ART through assisted partner notification services at LRRH.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study using a quantitative method. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaire for a sample size of 424. Quantitative data was entered, cleaned and analyzed using SPSS version 16.0 at Univariate, Bivariate and Multivariate Level.

Results: Retention level among HIV patients enrolled on ART through APNs was at 77% (327/424) … factors that were associated with this retention level included; gender (AOR 0.37 CI=0.21-0.64), marital status (AOR 2.31 CI=1.37-4.00), linkage to care (AOR 7.40 CI=2.77-19.67), stigma (AOR 1.74 CI=1.00-3.00), and pill burden (AOR 2.37 CI=1.151-4.867).

Conclusion: Retention level of HIV patients enrolled on ART through APNs at LRRH was fair at 77% according to ministry of health. The factors associated with retention level in this study includes; gender, marital status, stigma, linkage to care and pill burden.

Recommendation: MoH and policy makers should strengthen their social behavioral change strategies targeting sexual partners and male engagement in HIV care.

Keywords: *Retention, HIV patients, ART, and Assisted Partner Notification Services*