

Follow-Up Rate Trends in a Fully Scaled VMMC Program in Tanzania

Authors and Affiliations

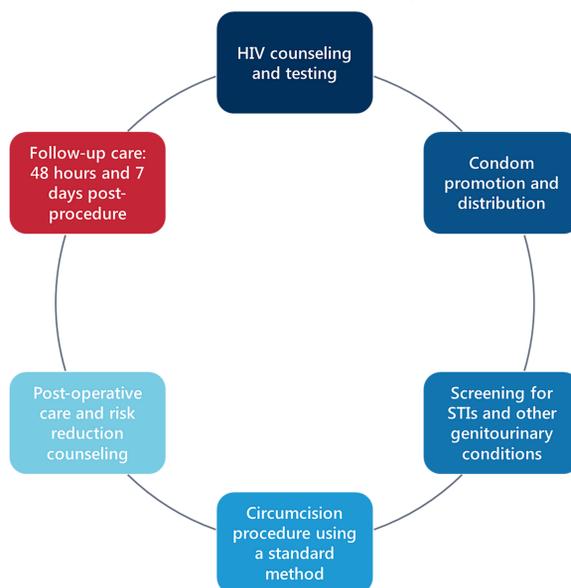
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Tanzania has scaled up voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) for HIV prevention in 12 priority regions. The U.S. President's Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Strengthening High-Impact Interventions for an AIDS-Free Generation (AIDSFree), Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP), and Accelovate projects—implemented by Jhpiego—is supporting the Ministry of Health, Gender, Community Development, Elderly and Children (MOHCDEC) to scale up VMMC service delivery programs in three priority regions: Iringa, Njombe, and Tabora. The program provides the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommended minimum package of VMMC services. The minimum package recommends that circumcision clients return for post-procedure appointments with providers after 48 hours and 7 days to assess healing, review for adverse events (AEs), and reinforce HIV prevention messages. Ensuring high follow-up rates can be challenging in rural settings, as clients often live far away from circumcision sites and do not have access to reliable transportation. Given this, the VMMC service delivery program did an analysis from 2009 through 2015 to identify the barriers of attending follow-up appointments by clients and introduced various interventions to improve follow-up rates.

Link Between Follow-Up Visits and AE Rates

- ▶ The average reported AE rate in the AIDSFree VMMC program has remained below 2%.
- ▶ Post-operative AEs can only be assessed and documented if the clients return for follow-up appointments.
- ▶ It was often assumed that if clients did not return for follow-up appointments, they did not have an AE.
- ▶ A study done in Kenya demonstrated higher AE rates in clients who were circumcised and did not return for follow-up appointments than those who did.
- ▶ Increasing the follow-up rate of clients post-procedure is important to ensure clients are educated in post-operative care and that providers can assess, document, and treat AEs.
- ▶ Increasing the follow-up rate of clients post-operatively is important to ensure clients are educated in post-operative care, assessed for adverse events, and AEs—if they are detected—are managed promptly, documented and reported.

WHO VMMC Minimum Package of Services



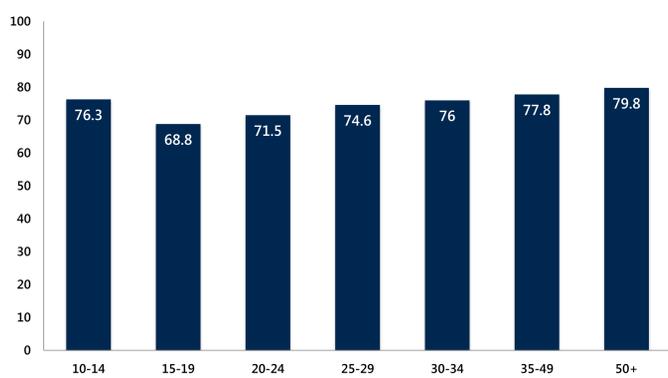
Methodology

- ▶ Deidentified data from September 2009–September 2015 from the VMMC client-level database was reviewed.
- ▶ The analysis was performed on follow-ups by year, age of clients, and service modality.
- ▶ 48-hour and 7-day follow-up rates were calculated and statistical tests were performed as appropriate.

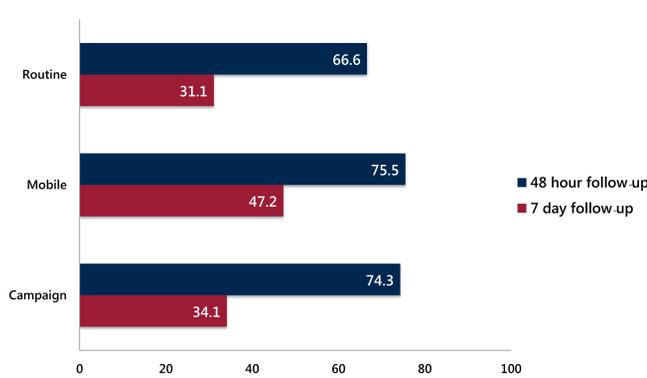
Results

- ▶ 495,871 clients received VMMC services from 2009–2015. The cumulative return rate for the 48-hour follow-up visit was 73.6% (365,081 clients).
- ▶ The cumulative return rate for the 7-day follow-up visit was 34.3% (169,859 clients).

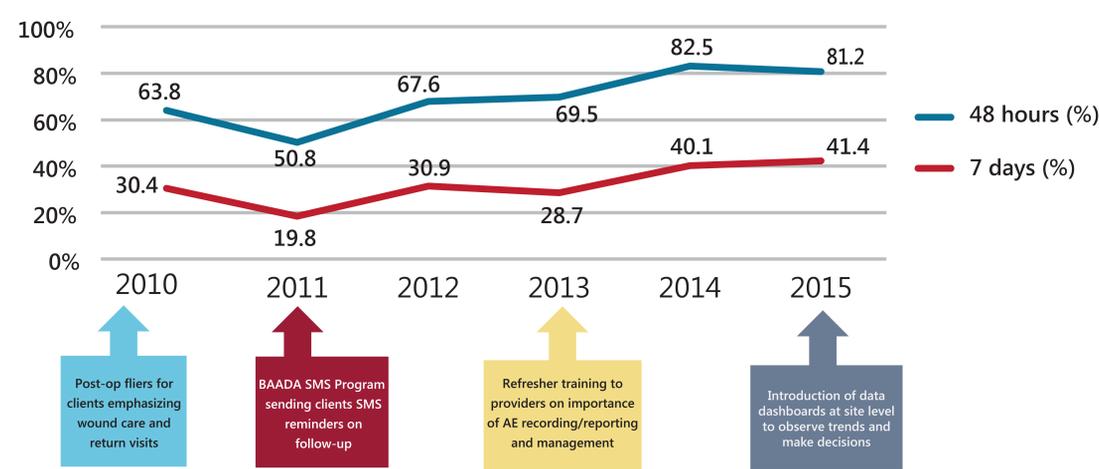
Follow-Up Rate Within the First Seven Days, by Age



Percentage of Follow-Up Rates by Service Modality



Correlation of Interventions with Improved Follow-Up Rate



Improving Follow-Up Rates

Various strategies were identified and implemented by the AIDSFree, Accelovate and MCHIP programs to increase follow-up rates, including:

- ▶ Providing a post-operative brochure to clients emphasizing importance of returning for follow-up appointments
- ▶ Sending clients automatic appointment reminders via text message
- ▶ Providing special training to providers to reinforce their education/counseling on follow-up appointments, AE reporting, and documentation of follow-up rates
- ▶ Using data from provider-managed data dashboards at site level to influence decision-making to improve services
- ▶ Improving client flow at the sites to ensure clients were seen promptly.

Conclusion

- ▶ Follow-up rates during mobile and campaign service modes were noticeably better because counselors were given cell phones to follow up directly with clients.
- ▶ Cumulatively, the various innovations employed have improved the follow-up rates over time.
- ▶ Continued work must be done to maintain and improve follow-up rates in VMMC programming.

