



Prevalence and Correlates of Youth Voluntary Counseling and Testing Uptake among Students of Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Background: HIV/AIDS remains to be a major public health concern worldwide, and young people are among the most vulnerable groups. Compared to adults, youth are characterized by significant physiological, psychological and social changes and aspirations that place their life at risky sexual and reproductive outcomes. Given the sensitive nature of adolescents' sex and sexuality, students in the developing world are less informed, less experienced, and less comfortable in accessing VCT services than are adults. In the absence of VCT services designed to cater the special needs of young students, it is reasonable to expect substantial VCT uptake problems for the youth in higher educational institutions.

Methods: Using data collected through a cross-sectional survey questionnaire and adopting binary logistic regression model, this paper analyzed the prevalence of and factors associated with voluntary counseling and testing (VCT hereafter) uptake among 354 randomly selected young students from two higher education institutions in Addis Ababa.

Results: Nearly three quarter of the respondents uptake VCT service at least once in their life time. Not having VCT knowledge (AOR: 6.34; CI: 2.67, 15.10; having a father with secondary and/or preparatory school education (AOR: 5.90; CI: 1.44, 24.39 and/or AOR: 4.02; CI: 1.12, 16.64; not having previous contraceptives use experience (AOR: 20.1; CI: 3.35, 120.3); and being neutral whether VCT uptake is unlikely when waiting time is too long (AOR: 1.73; CI: 0.92, 3.29). Whereas, being older than 18 years (AOR: 0.77; CI: 0.62, 0.97; being a second year student (AOR: 0.54; CI: 0.25, 1.14; being from a woman-headed household (AOR: 0.33; CI: 0.09, 1.04; and deciding jointly on contraceptives (AOR: 0.36; CI: 0.14, 0.90) were less likely to uptake VCT service.

Conclusion: While VCT service uptake by the largest proportion of students is encouraged and its relationship with most predictors is clear, the direction of association between VCT uptake and VCT knowledge and VCT uptake and waiting time is unclear. Future research may need to consider these variables further.

Keywords: Voluntary counseling and testing sexually transmitted infections, reproductive health, family planning, higher education institutions and VCT.

Biography

Chalachew Getahun Desta was an assistant professor, Center for Population Studies, College of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University. He has published many research articles and received many awards for his publications.



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