

VOLUNTARY COUNSELLING AND TESTING: FACTORS AFFECTING OPERATIONAL QUALITY IN THREE PROVINCES

Mothibe N, Hlongwane S¹

Background

A study was undertaken in 2004 to assess the performance of Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) at one hundred (100) selected sites in Mpumalanga, Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Cape Provinces.

Aims

The study aimed to assess the operational quality of VCT services in terms of human resource capacity and skills; accessibility; utilization and functional efficiency, and to assess the perception of clients of the VCT service. Finally, it aimed to provide relevant information and recommendations for infrastructure renovation, and improvements of VCT services.

Methods

Key informant interviews (qualitative and semi-structured) were conducted with individuals selected for their knowledge of the issues regarding VCT and their perceptions of VCT. Mini-surveys were also conducted using non-probability sampling techniques to generate quantitative data that could be collected and analysed efficiently, and direct observation was also used by teams of observers who recorded ongoing activities and processes, using a detailed observation tool/checklist.

Results

Mpumalanga: Of the 100 facilities assessed, VCT was provided by 92 facilities, with 38 urban and 62 rural. 738 of the 946 clients interviewed were female (78%) and 82% walked to the facilities.

Kwa-Zulu Natal: Of the 100 facilities assessed, VCT was provided by 98 facilities, 24 were urban and 74 rural. 779 of the 906 clients interviewed were female (86%) and 68% walked to the facilities. 50% of the clients reported visiting the facility at least once a month.

Eastern Cape: Of the 100 facilities assessed, VCT was provided by 86 facilities, 18 were urban and 82 rural. 255 of the 307 clients interviewed were female (83%) and 86.9% walked to the facilities.

Conclusions

Quality control as well as supervision needs to be strengthened. Data collection at facility level needs to be better coordinated. The quality of the VCT service can be improved through the development of facility infrastructure.